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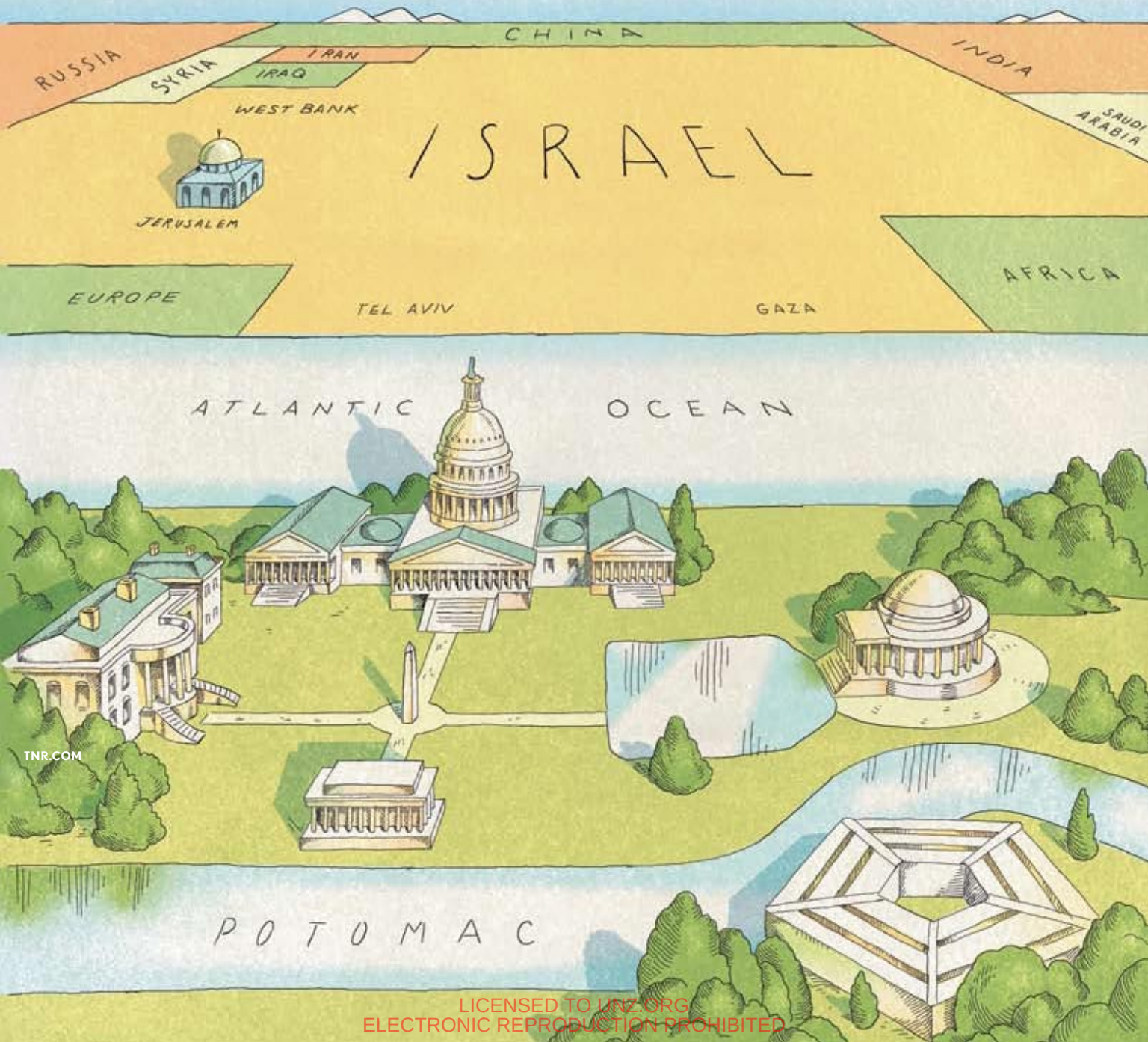

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Journal of Politics and the Arts

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Faux Hawk

It is the fate of all presidents to be compared to their predecessors. For several years, George W. Bush's analogies ran to the favorable, at least for some: Like Truman, he was forging a new foreign policy for a new age. Like Reagan, he was boldly spreading freedom to oppressed lands. Lately, however, Bush is more likely to find himself in the company of those chief executives whom historians tend to place on lists of America's worst: Buchanan, Hoover, Nixon. But those figures don't seem to haunt him nearly as much as another presidential specter—that of James Monroe. In his rush to improve his legacy, Bush seems eager to avoid joining Monroe as the two-term president with the least used veto pen. How else to explain his threat to veto nine of the twelve spending bills just passed by the House and currently under consideration by the Senate?

Bush has sent seven budgets to Capitol Hill. The six times those budgets were received by a Republican-controlled Congress, legislators occasionally sent back spending bills that slightly exceeded his requests. Until now, this was never considered a grave threat to the fiscal health of the Republic—certainly not serious enough to merit a presidential veto. The current bills are no worse. They envision spending a total of $22 billion more than Bush asked for. This amounts to less than 1 percent of the federal budget and is dwarfed by the more than $100 billion per year spent on the war in Iraq.

These veto threats would be less absurd if they came from a president with an established track record of fiscal responsibility. But Bush didn't hesitate to sign off on bloated spending bills—including a $1.2 trillion Medicare prescription-drug benefit—when he thought it might help Republicans keep control of Congress. And now he whines about "irresponsible levels of spending" and threatens to bring the federal government to a standstill over a fraction of a percent of the budget?

The federal budget has grown at an average rate of 6.1 percent per year under Bush, twice the rate at which it grew under President Clinton. Conservatives often retort that the growth of government during the Bush administration is simply a function of spending on homeland security and wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. They're wrong: Even domestic non-homeland-security discretionary spending has risen faster under Bush than it did during the Clinton years. All this might be fine if he had deigned to pay for it. Instead, he opted for $2 trillion worth of tax cuts.

None of which is to say that the $22 billion in spending that has so offended the president is so vital to the commonweal—there are a few pet congressional projects we'd like to see axed ourselves. But, by assuming the role of phony budget hawk, Bush might inflict real harm on Americans who depend on the federal government for critical services. Beyond the nine spending bills, yet another piece of legislation the president has threatened to veto is a measure reauthorizing the wildly popular and successful State Children's Health Insurance Program. The program is set to expire on September 30, so millions of low-income children could see their health insurance lapse unless Washington gets its act together. The reauthorization, which passed the Senate with a bipartisan majority, expands the program by a modest $7 billion a year in order to cover an additional four million children. And that sum was apparently enough to make Bush reach for his veto pen.

If the president wants to don the mantle of fiscal discipline, he will have to do more than excise a few billion dollars in spending. The Center for Budget and Policy Priorities estimates that, if current taxation levels and spending formulas are kept in place, rapidly rising health care and Social Security costs will cause the national debt to increase from 37 percent of GDP today to a staggering 231 percent of GDP by 2050. Averting this budgetary meltdown cannot be done simply by chipping away at modest social programs—it is going to require tax increases. Regardless of what happens with the bills now in play, Bush will leave his successor a budget outlook far more dire than the one he inherited from Clinton.

At least with the veto, Bush will be one step further removed from the legacy of James Monroe. Not that that was ever a great danger. Monroe, after all, ratcheted down partisanship, ushering in the Era of Good Feelings. Needless to say, Bush's legacy will be different.

Keith Negley

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Free Larry Summers

Larry Summers is a cheerleader for terrorism; he boasts of his success in purging homosexuals from his midst; he brags of his desire to wipe the Jewish state from the map.

Wait, we must have confused the former Harvard president with the current Iranian one. And so must have someone else. How else can you explain the fact that, at the same time one major U.S. university lent a platform to Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, another U.S. university denied a platform to Summers? Perhaps this is what is meant by intellectual diversity.

A day after Ahmadinejad addressed a crowd at Columbia University, Summers was supposed to speak before the University of California Board of Regents at a dinner in Sacramento. Summers, as you might recall, earned the enmity of a sizable portion of the professoriate by tentatively suggesting that innate gender differences might possibly explain the paucity of female scientists, mathematicians, and engineers. Because of these comments from two years ago, a group of professors at UC Davis signed a petition demanding that the Regents rescind their invitation. The Regents quickly complied with the protesters' demands. Powerful men and women, these? Maybe, but also easily frightened.

It is lunacy that Summers, a truly brilliant social scientist, should have this kind of infamy. For starters, he only posited this theory for the gender gap as a possibility—and there's no reason why that kind of discussion of a complicated problem should be taboo. Then, there's the totality of Summers' presidency and the refreshingly energetic style that he brought to the job. He understood that there is a vast chasm in our best colleges and universities between students and faculty over the place of teaching in the academy. Harvard is an instance of a great institution where undergraduate teaching had simply become a secondary function. He also tackled matters most uncomfortable for lackluster teachers: the rigor mortis of narrowly defined disciplines in a world where those lines are more and more obsolete; the hostility of the humanities to the sciences; and the indifference to literacy and the arts of many scientists and technologists.

This was an exhilarating academic reform agenda—an agenda that students more easily appreciated than their elders. Some of the most infuriated faculty had the nerve to slime him as a racist for challenging their entrenched ways. But, when Larry Summers stood up to receive his honorary doctorate from Harvard this past June, the response from graduating seniors and others receiving their advanced degrees was ear-splitting applause. This wasn't an isolated outburst, but an omen of a growing student–tenured teacher divide that will increasingly define American universities.

In short, Summers has something to say about higher education that the UC Regents could certainly stand to hear. Alas, thanks to their cowardice, they probably won't ever hear it. That a group of powerful people like the Regents can be so easily intimidated shows the fragility of intellectual freedom at our universities. (The University of California, by the way, is the same institution that administered the anti-Communist blacklist in the 1950s and '60s.)

Ahmadinejad, with his pledge of genocide and sponsorship of attacks against American soldiers, arguably falls into the category of power-wielding crank who doesn't deserve any of the legitimacy that comes with such a prestigious platform. The Summers invitation, on the other hand, shouldn't be the stuff of controversy. And that Summers is the one deprived of a microphone tells you something is terribly amiss in the American academy. ◆

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Does the Universe have a Purpose?

Not Sure.

Anyone who expresses a more definitive response to the question is claiming access to knowledge

not based on empirical foundations. This remarkably persistent way of thinking, common to most religions and some branches of philosophy, has failed badly in past efforts to understand, and thereby predict the operations of the universe and our place within it.

To assert that the universe has a purpose implies the universe has intent. And intent implies a desired outcome. But who would do the desiring? And what would a desired outcome be? That carbon-based life is inevitable? Or that sentient primates are life's neurological pinnacle? Are answers to these questions even possible without expressing a profound bias of human sentiment? Of course humans were not around to ask these questions for 99.9999% of cosmic history…

CONTINUED ONLINE.

Neil deGrasse Tyson is an astrophysicist and the director of New York City's Hayden Planetarium.

Yes.

Consider this question: Do the Earth and mankind have a purpose? Namely, to defeat and rise above our animal natures; to

create goodness, beauty, and holiness where only physics and animal life once existed; to create what might be (if we succeed) the only tiny pinprick of goodness in the universe—which is otherwise (so far as we know) morally null and void. If no other such project exists anywhere in the cosmos, our victory would change the nature of the universe. If there are similar projects elsewhere, more power to them; but our own task remains unchanged.

Why seek goodness?

Because most humans desire goodness…

CONTINUED ONLINE.

David Gelernter is a professor of computer science at Yale University and a national fellow at the American Enterprise Institute.

Indeed.

But it is not possible to know that by looking at the natural world alone. The question of purpose is closely related to the question of whether something like the God of Western monotheistic religions can be known to exist by studying the order, goodness, and grandeur of the universe.

Already around 1750 David Hume pointed out that if one is looking at evidence of design, then all of the evidence must be taken into account: not only order and goodness but disorder and evil as well. He seems to think that some sort of creator is possible (in his *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, published posthumously in 1779, it is not clear which character represents Hume's own views). But if so, we can know next to nothing about the creator's qualities: an intelligence, for all we know, as much like ours as our intelligence is like the rotting of a turnip—one deity or a team; alive or dead; a juvenile or superannuated deity.

If one cannot infer the purposes of a benevolent creator from evidence in the natural world, then how can I (and my co-religionists) claim to know the world's purpose?…

CONTINUED ONLINE.

Nancey Murphy is a professor of Christian philosophy at Fuller Theological Seminary.

No.

I should mention first that this is a loaded question, with several hidden implications. A "purpose" presupposes a mind that conceived it, as well as the ability to implement it. In the present case, this means that the owner of the mind not only created the universe the way it is, but could have created another universe and decided to create the existing one for a specific reason. So the question really deals with the belief in a Creator who enjoys almost infinite power and freedom but, at the same time, goes through the very human process of pondering decisions and acting accordingly. In a way, this is a very anthropomorphic vision of God.

A second aspect of the question: What did God have in mind in creating the universe the way it is? Being the ones who ask the question, it is obvious that

we see ourselves as at least part of God's goal. As pointed out by the defenders of the "anthropic principle," what is peculiar about the universe is that it happens to have just the right physical properties to give rise to life and, through life, to human minds. Such an anthropocentric view of the creation is, however, not readily reconciled with what is known of the evolutionary origin of humankind…

CONTINUED ONLINE.

Christian de Duve is a biochemist. He was the recipient of the 1974 Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine.

Unlikely.

Perhaps you hoped for a stronger statement, one way or the other. But as a scientist I don't believe I can make one. Science can never unambiguously prove that there is no such purpose. As Carl Sagan said, in another context: Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.

Of course, nothing would stop science from uncovering positive evidence of divine guidance. For example, tomorrow night if we look up at the stars and they have been rearranged into a pattern that reads, "I am here," I think even the most hard-nosed scientific skeptic would suspect something was up.

But no such unambiguous signs have been uncovered among the millions and millions of pieces of data we have gleaned about the natural world over centuries of exploration. And this is precisely why a scientist can conclude that it is very unlikely that there is any divine purpose…

CONTINUED ONLINE.

Lawrence M. Krauss is a professor of physics and astronomy at Case Western Reserve University and the director of the Center for Education and Research in Cosmology and Astrophysics.

To read these essays in their entirety, and to learn more about the authors, visit www.templeton.org/purpose

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Nam Disclosure

The scandalous secret in John McCain's past—revealed.

JONATHAN CHAIT

'McCain said that he urged Kerry some time ago not to talk about Vietnam during his campaign. 'I did advise John. I said, "Look, you shouldn't talk about Vietnam because everybody else will. Let everybody else do it." His advisers figured that was probably not enough, that he had to emphasize that in his campaign. In my campaign, as you know, I didn't talk about it because I didn't need to.'"
— *The Washington Post*, August 27, 2004

The New Republic has learned that Republican Senator and presidential candidate John McCain served in the military during the Vietnam war and was captured and tortured as a prisoner of war. McCain, who is notoriously reticent about his Vietnam-era history, has not yet confirmed or denied this discovery, though, in fairness to him, TNR has not yet gotten around to calling his office for comment, what with all the interesting things to read on the Internet.

This discovery could shake the Arizona senator's already foundering campaign. McCain has expressed a principled opposition to candidates running on their military service. As he said about John Kerry in 2004, "Let's worry about the war that's going on in Iraq. Probably some American is dying today in Iraq. I'd like us to focus our attention on the war at hand and how we can win it, rather than revisiting the one that was over thirty years ago." No doubt McCain would be mortified if his own Vietnam record were injected into the present campaign.

The first clue toward unearthing McCain's history of service was his recent campaigning in New Hampshire, where he has surrounded himself with Vietnam veterans, worn a NAVY hat, and frequently campaigned in VFW halls. Why, I wondered, would McCain, of all people, focus his efforts among veterans, especially those of Vietnam vintage?

Looking for answers, I opened McCain's new book, *Hard Call: Great Decisions and the Extraordinary People Who Made Them*. In the introduction, McCain recounts the story of Bud Day, an Air Force major who nearly escaped captivity by the Vietcong. Within a few pages I found cryptic hints, such as,

TRB
From Washington

"But for Bud Day and his misfortune, I do not think I would have ever left that prison." *Prison*? Why would McCain have been in a North Vietnamese prison?

In the beginning of the next chapter, McCain describes his "last combat mission in Vietnam," where he was shot down and had "five and a half very long years to regret [his] decision." Then, however, the book turns to general ruminations about decision-making and tough decisions made by other great men of history, and the question of what happened after he was shot down is left unanswered.

At this point, the trail seemed to grow cold. But then I found his previous book, *Character Is Destiny: Inspiring Stories Every Young Person Should Know and Every Adult Should Remember*. And the book before that, *Why Courage Matters: The Way to a Braver Life*. And the book before that, *Worth the Fighting For: The Education of an American Maverick, and the Heroes Who Inspired Him*. And his first book, *Faith of My Fathers: A Family Memoir*. I didn't actually read any of these books, but I did detect a common theme of courage and heroism—almost as if those qualities could be imputed to McCain himself, for some reason.

The smoking gun came when, in the course of surfing the Internet, I found a twelve-minute video about McCain. Purportedly, it lays out the case for McCain's candidacy, but, in fact, the vast majority of it consists of video and photographs of McCain as, yes, a prisoner of war. Somehow, the history of McCain's service he had so assiduously tried to keep from the public had leaked its way into the public domain at last. And I discovered it, of all places, on the official McCain campaign website.

OK, so maybe they're *not* trying to hide McCain's service. Quite the contrary. Over the last few weeks, McCain has been less subtle about touting his military record than he was eight years ago, surrounding himself with POW colleagues testifying to his courage. Which, again, reopens the question: Why does that record matter?

The official explanation is that McCain's heroic record makes him more prepared to conduct foreign policy than other candidates. As his spokesperson recently put it, "John McCain's record of service and sacrifice makes him uniquely qualified—more than anyone else running on either side—to lead as commander-in-chief from day one."

But the official explanation is obvious bunk. McCain's years in the Senate might qualify him as commander-in-chief. His prisoner of war experience is, at best, a marginal consideration. James Stockdale—another Vietnam POW hero and Ross Perot's hapless 1992 running mate—was not more qualified to serve as commander-in-chief than non-veteran Joe Biden. Most Republicans would prefer a conservative non-veteran like Rudy Giuliani or Mitt Romney over liberal general Wesley Clark.

McCain, no doubt, isn't really trying to persuade voters that his years as a prisoner in Hanoi have rendered him more qualified to grapple with the foreign policy landscape of 2009. The real point of constantly invoking his service is to substitute the gratitude and admiration we (rightly) feel about McCain's war service for our judgment of him as a political figure.

Of course, McCain is hardly the only person in American politics who has tried to turn public admiration for the sacrifices of the military into political gain. The entire reason figures like David Petraeus and Cindy Sheehan have taken on an outsized role in the war debate is that they're convenient symbols. To attack their position is to attack the brave soldiers or grieving war mothers.

It can only work, though, if it doesn't look like a conscious act of manipulation. The administration took great pains to present Petraeus as an independent military figure, rather than a leader hand-picked to carry out the strategy in which he had become deeply invested. Likewise, McCain never describes himself as a hero, but audience members at his campaign appearances routinely call him one while he modestly demurs. If being called a hero really bothers him, I'd suggest that he consider cutting back on the public tributes to his heroism, at least while he's on stage.

Few people want to point out the sham because nobody wants to appear churlish about McCain's genuinely awe-inspiring history. You might think I'm brave to do it, but don't call me a hero. Well, OK, go ahead. ◆

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CORRESPONDENCE

Accounting Error

Stephanie Mencimer's article on the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC) and OCC Chief Counsel Julie Williams was both dismaying and disappointing because of its serious errors of fact and judgment ("No Account," August 27).

In fact, the OCC has done a great deal for banking consumers, including our pioneering enforcement action against Providian National Bank in 2000 for unfair and deceptive marketing practices. While many banking lawyers and lobbyists argued at the time that no banking agency had the legal authority to take such an action, the OCC, based on legal arguments put forth by Williams, took the action that resulted in the bank returning $300 million to customers. Other agencies have since followed the OCC's lead, but no one should forget how difficult or controversial that first case was.

It seems odd that Mencimer would so sharply criticize OCC legal positions, implying it is totally out of the mainstream. In fact, these positions have been vindicated by a nearly unbroken string of judicial decisions by the Supreme Court and federal courts from nearly every part of the country—and authored by a wide range of judges appointed by presidents from both the major political parties. The essence of all these decisions is that, ever since it enacted the National Bank Act in 1864, Congress intended for national banks to be subject to a uniform set of national laws established by Congress and implemented by the OCC and not to be subject to conflicting state laws. Not surprisingly, that federal principle is not popular with the states, but it is the law of the land. Mencimer may not like that principle either, but that is no reason for launching a diatribe against a career civil servant who has faithfully advocated the views of the agency she represents in legal positions that have been repeatedly ratified by the courts.

John C. Dugan
Comptroller of the Currency
Washington, D.C.

Stephanie Mencimer responds:

I'm always baffled as to why the OCC continues to herald the Providian settlement as evidence of its commitment to consumer protection. That case, now seven years old, was initiated by the tiny San Francisco district attorney's office, which had received hundreds of complaints from customers about credit card late fees. The OCC didn't lift a finger against Providian, a well-known poster child for credit card abuses, until the San Francisco investigation hit the newsstands. (Providian was so bad that it bar-coded its payment envelopes with the wrong zip code to guarantee that customer payments would be delivered late and thus incur a late fee.) When the OCC first contacted the D.A.'s office about Providian, it was to tell the San Francisco prosecutors to drop the case because they lacked jurisdiction. This was hardly a stellar moment for the nation's top banking regulator.

It's telling that the OCC can't actually point to a single public consumer protection enforcement action taken against a big national bank that the agency initiated on its own. Indeed, the OCC only goes to court over consumer protection issues when it's attempting to put the kibosh on an enforcement action by a state against one of the banks it regulates. There's also little evidence that the "guidance" the OCC is supposedly offering the national banks on credit cards or predatory lending has made much of an impact. In fact, abusive late fees, like those Providian specialized in, have ballooned 160 percent over the past decade, and some attorneys general believe that the OCC's legal actions have actually made banks more brazen in defrauding customers because they know they don't have to worry about state regulatory investigations.

Most criticism of the OCC concerns its priorities. Just because the OCC has the power to help trillion-dollar institutions further tromp on debt-ridden Americans doesn't mean that it should.

Unfair Criticism

His natural habitat threatened by the growing popularity of the FairTax, Bruce Bartlett rather sadly resorts to the most damning fiction he can create in order to malign this thoroughly researched proposal ("Dianetics, the Tax Plan," September 10). Misdirection is, of course, a valuable skill for pickpockets and stage magicians. But, in the case of public policy, it is a coarse path that reflects poorly on the performer and ill serves honest debate.

The FairTax was developed over the course of several years, independently of any other proposal, by noted economists after extensive market research was conducted into what the public desired in the way of a national tax system. It was originally developed, and has gained popular support, precisely because the current income tax system has so damaged the nation and so bedevils individual taxpayers. Its origins, therefore, can be found in the sincere desire of citizens, economists, and public-policy experts to see fairness, simplicity, and transparency replace the mind-numbing complexity of the tax system that so well serves self-styled experts like Bartlett. With the FairTax, foreign manufacturers would no longer see a price advantage over the "Made in America" label; taxpayers would be freed from the embarrassing and wasted $265 billion dollars annually it costs merely to comply with the income tax system; and American earnings, investment, and productivity would no longer be subject to congressional power struggles, the profit motives of tax lobbyists, and yes, the intellect of individuals such as Bartlett.

Our FairTax campaign now verges on becoming a powerful national movement because the public desperately desires a better way to collect federal taxes for the common good and recognizes the current system as both inherently flawed and further corrupted by inside-the-Beltway machinations. Those who are joining our effort understand that overcoming the self-interest of the increasingly disdained Congress and the army of income tax system defenders is no small task. Distortions such as Bartlett's, however, just fuel the growing grassroots movement to drive public policy right over the broken income tax system and all its followers.

Leo Linbeck
Chairman and CEO
Americans for Fair Taxation
Houston, Texas

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ANTHONY RUSSO

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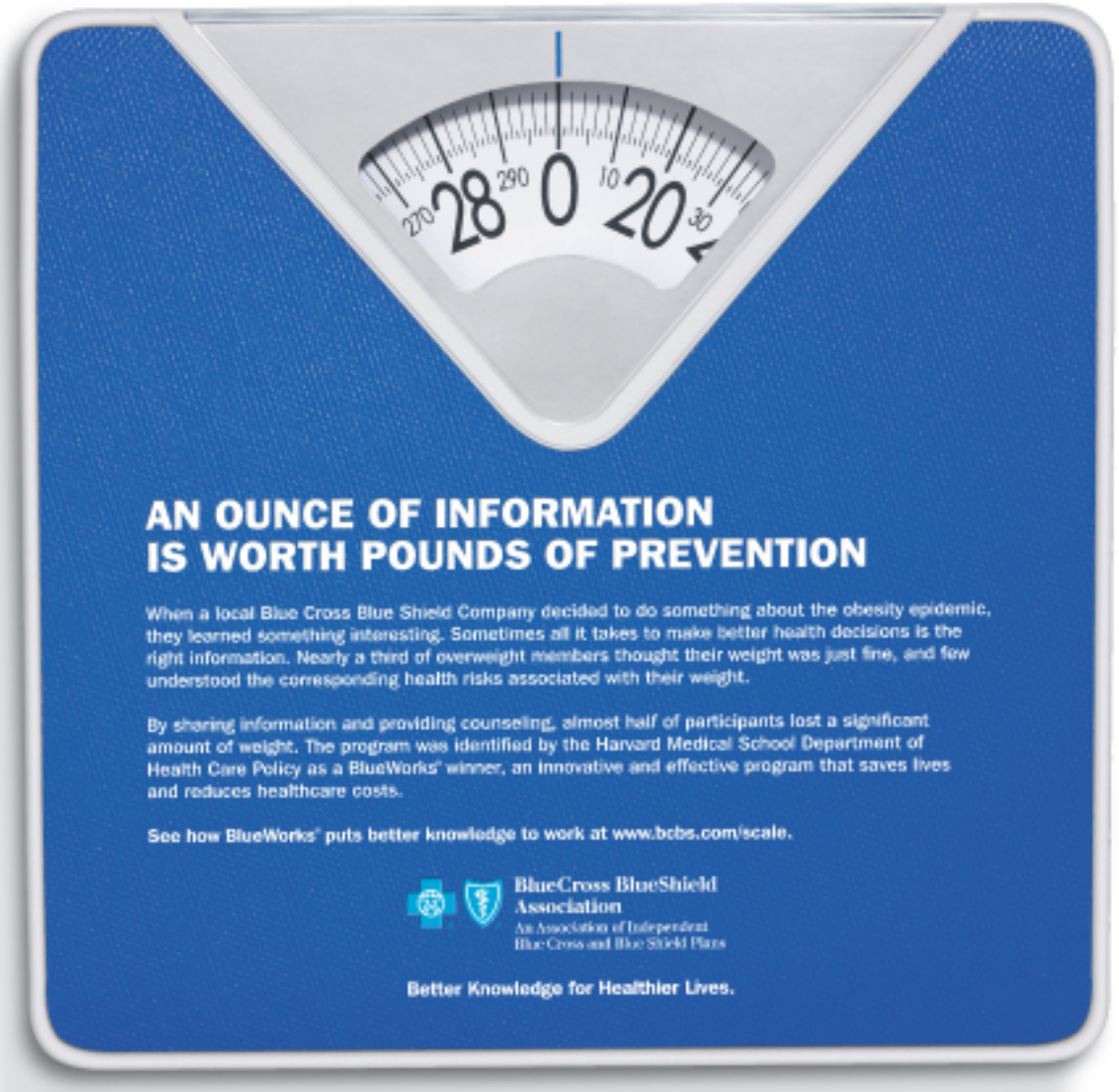
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The Mall

Osama's Book Club

Al Qaeda's fall reading picks.

What has Osama bin Laden been doing all these years? Some suspect that he's cave-hopping while trying to evade the U.S. military. Others have posited that he's plotting his comeback, training a brand new coterie of jihadis. But in his most recent video, released September 7, he inadvertently gives away his game: He's been holed up in the Waziristan Public Library.

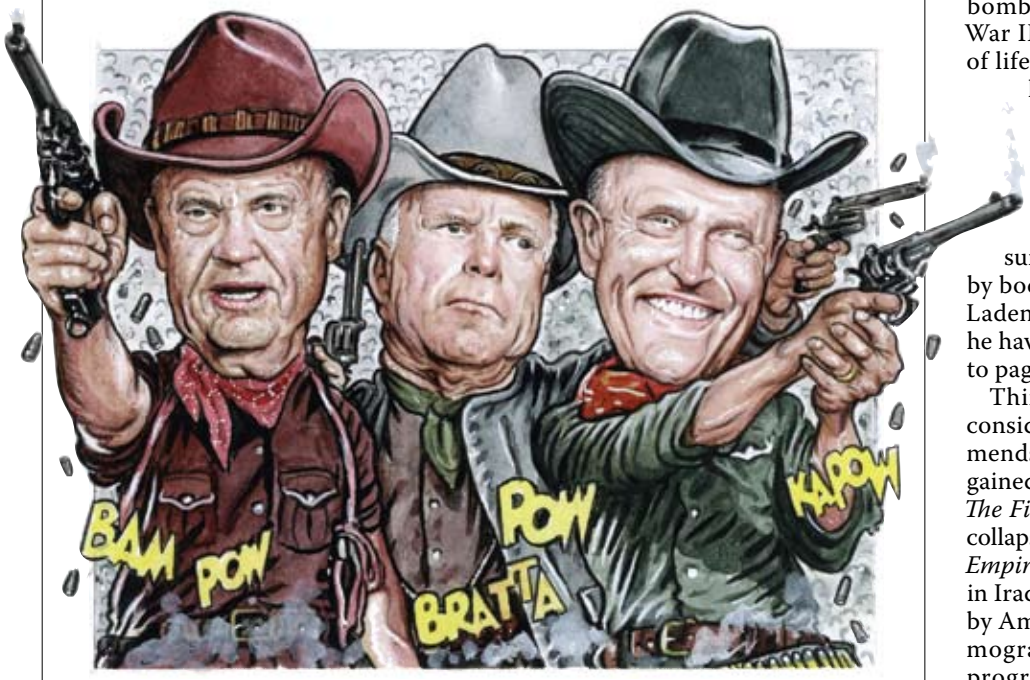
Specifically, he's been reading books that purport to explain his own rise and the failure of the United States to capture him. In his video, Osama plays the role of Oprah, urging viewers to read two such tomes: Michael Scheuer's *Imperial Hubris* and Emmanuel Todd's *After the Empire*. I don't usually act on the orders contained in bin Laden's messages. Still, I thought that rereading Scheuer and reading Todd (whom I previously had not heard of) might reveal something about bin Laden's state of mind.

At some level, you can see what might have attracted bin Laden to *Imperial Hubris*. Scheuer, who once ran the CIA's anti–bin Laden operation, insists that the Al Qaeda leader and other Islamists don't "attack us for what we are and think" but for "what we do." "Their goal is not to wipe out our secular democracy," he writes, "but to deter us by military means from attacking the things they love." Bin Laden's goals, Scheuer argues, consist of eliminating both U.S. aid to Israel and Israel itself as a Jewish state; removing U.S. troops from Muslim lands; ending American support for "apostate Muslim regimes" in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere; and protecting Arab oil from Western exploitation by selling it at higher prices. Insofar as some of these pet causes have earned bin Laden sympathy in the Muslim world, Scheuer wants us to neutralize them: He urges a reconsideration of U.S. policy toward Israel, a move toward energy self-sufficiency, and an end to neo-imperial ventures like the Iraq war.

But he *also* thinks that, while such changes in policy would make our struggle against Islamists easier, the United States cannot back down from its battle with Al Qaeda. "Simply put," Scheuer writes, "the enemy wants war and is not listening; he has no reason to listen, he is winning. We have no choice but to fight." And Scheuer's battle plan is anything but pacific: It's Sherman's 1864 march to the sea and the Allied firebombing of Axis cities during World War II. "To secure as much of our way of life as possible," he argues, "we will have to use military force in the way Americans used it on the fields of Virginia and Georgia, in France and on Pacific Islands and from skies over Tokyo and Dresden. Progress will be measured by the pace of killing and, yes, by body counts." Is this really what bin Laden wants Americans to read? Does he have a death wish? Or did he not get to page 241?

Things get even stranger when you consider the other book Osama recommends. Todd, a French social scientist, gained his reputation from a 1976 work, *The Final Fall*, predicting the eventual collapse of Soviet communism. *After the Empire*, which appeared before the war in Iraq, was either ignored or dismissed by American intellectuals. Todd is a demographer who believes that human progress can be measured in literacy, birth rates, and infant mortality rates. In *After the Empire*, he contends that

WHITE HOUSE WATCH *With* **DREW FRIEDMAN**



Pandering to the NRA.

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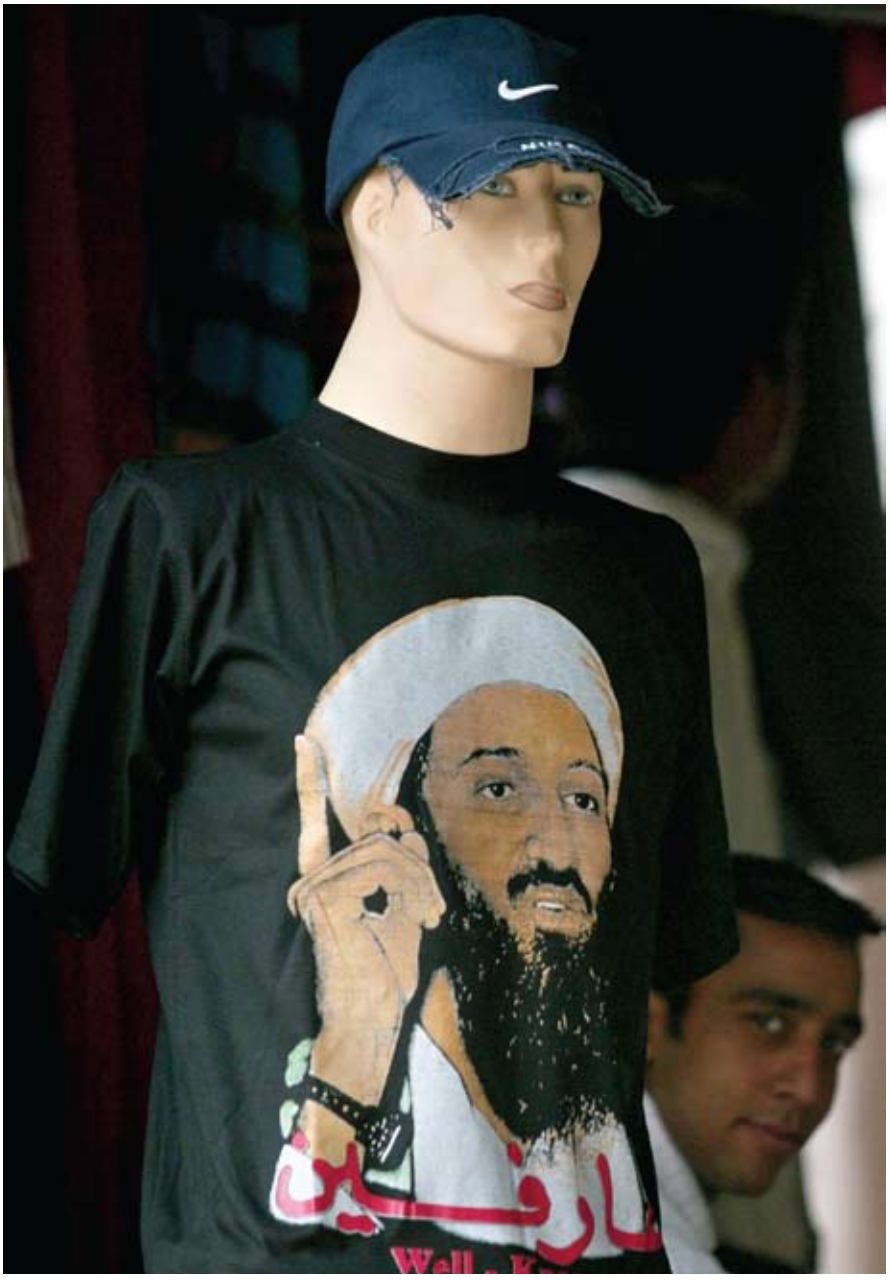
dramatic increases in literacy eventually push countries toward democracy, but that, in the initial phase, mass consciousness can lead to violent upheaval and to the clash of tradition with modernity. That happened when Cromwell seized power in seventeenth-century England and again during the French Revolution. The Muslim world, he argues, is currently going through exactly this kind of transition. But, because it is only a transition, Todd rejects any notion of an enduring clash of civilizations: "The violence and religious frenzy are only temporary. . . . [A]fter a distinct phase of modernization, societies are quieting down and finding forms of non-totalitarian government that are acceptable to a majority of the population." He counts Turkey, Algeria, and Iran among those Muslim countries that are further along this path, whereas Saudi Arabia and Pakistan have just begun the switch.

Todd sees bin Laden as part of this transition process—and a fairly minor and eccentric part at that. "The Al Qaeda organization, a band of mentally disturbed but ingenious terrorists," Todd writes, "emerged from within a relatively small and circumscribed part of the planet, Saudi Arabia, even if Bin Laden and his associates recruited a few Egyptian turncoats and a handful of lost souls from the poor suburbs of Western Europe." While Scheuer would recommend a renewed focus on Al Qaeda, Todd thinks that the Bush administration has exaggerated the threat. Not only does he see bin Laden as "mentally disturbed," but, in the grand sweep of history, he also sees him as largely irrelevant.



What does all this say about bin Laden? Has the Al Qaeda leader become a sophisticated analyst of global trends—one who is willing to put aside minor differences, such as the fact that one author wants him dead and the other thinks he is loony? That theory certainly doesn't hold up once you consider his whole statement, the rest of which is filled with obligatory references to Allah and vintage anti-capitalist claptrap blaming "major corporations" for Iraq, Vietnam, and the assassination of John Kennedy. (The Waziristan library must have copies of Mark Lane's work.)

In fact, what is striking about the video is how much of it is devoted to appealing to the proletariat in all of us. Bin Laden is still clearly a champion of radical Islam, but he may be trying to broaden his appeal by marrying his theological views to the anti-imperialism that Arab revolutionaries championed in the 1960s and '70s. This would explain why Scheuer and Todd—whose books both include strong anti-imperialist streaks—caught bin Laden's attention. Maybe Osama is turning from Mohammed to Marx and Mao. If next year's reading list includes *Imperialism and All Reactionaries Are Paper Tigers*, then we'll have our answer.

John B. Judis

Unholy Communion

The African war over homosexuality.

In the past few years, conservative Episcopalians from a number of U.S. congregations have voted to bolt from their church and place themselves under various African leaders, including Nigeria's Anglican primate Peter Jasper Akinola. The source of the conservatives' discontent with the U.S. Episcopal Church was its liberal position on homosexuality. It had, after all, named an openly gay man bishop of New Hampshire. That was also the reason Akinola and other African clergy appealed to these largely white congregations. Akinola's church views any gay manifestation as an "acquired aberration"

FAROOQ NAEEM/AFP/GETTY IMAGES; ANTHONY RUSSO

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Office of National Drug Control Policy

DO YOU SPEAK TEEN?

mnE Ps dnt bleev der is a gNR8N d/c b/t em n thr teen. (Text Message Translation: Many parents don't believe there is a generation disconnect between them and their teen.) How much do parents really know about their teen's world? Especially as teens adapt to new technologies so quickly?

Unfortunately, parents still see only a glimpse of the world in which their teens live. The numbers are alarming:

- 80% of parents believe drugs and alcohol are usually not available at parties their teens attend, but the reality is sobering: 50% of teen partygoers attend parties where alcohol, drugs or both are available.[1]
- Prescription drugs, illegally used to get high, are the second most abused type of drug by teens, right behind marijuana.[2]
- The story isn't much different online: Three-fourths of teens report that their parents "almost never" monitor the Web sites they frequent or the time they spend online.[3]

There is good news. The majority of teens still report that their parents—not their peers or the media—have the biggest influence on their decision to stay drug-free. To learn more about how parents like you are connecting better with their teens, try these Action Items and report back at www.TheAntiDrug.com/ParentChronicles:

- Type "smoking weed" into a Web search engine and see what your teen is exposed to.
- Find out what the drug slang terms—"blazed," "xanibars," "a blunt" and "robotripping"—really mean.
- Type the name of your teen's high school into the "search" bar of a popular teen social networking site and browse the profiles.

Teens may be a hard study, but knowing more about their world—and the pressures and influences surrounding them—will help you connect better with your child and help keep him or her healthy and drug-free.

For more tips on keeping your teen drug-free, visit **www.TheAntiDrug.com/ParentChronicles** or call **1-800-788-2800**.

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[1]The National Survey of American Attitudes on Substance Abuse XI: Teens and Parents. The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University. August 2006.
[2]Monitoring the Future, National Institute on Drug Abuse. 2006.
[3]Teen Media: Parental Monitoring of the Internet, The TRU Study, Fall 2006 Wave 48. TRU, 2006.

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and has compared the U.S. Episcopal Church to a "cancerous lump." He has also backed legislation that prescribes severe prison sentences for gay sex.

But, while Akinola is the best-known anti-gay voice in Africa, he is hardly alone. If, tomorrow, he walked in front of a Lagos bus, other clerics—including Uganda's Henry Orombi and Rwanda's Emmanuel Kolini—would soon assume his role. Even the heroic Archbishop David Gitari—a leading opponent of dictatorship in his native Kenya for 30 years—has felt compelled to denounce same-sex unions in Canada as "immoral and contrary to the Bible."

The current prestige of African religious authorities like these in the United States makes for an interesting new chapter in the history of global Christianity, not to mention American culture. And the politics are even more complicated than that: By joining forces with their African Anglican peers, disgruntled U.S. congregations have unwittingly become players in a culture war over gay issues that is unfolding across the Atlantic. That war is political and religious and historical—and has almost nothing to do with our own.

Many African societies have well-established traditions of same-sex interactions and gay subcultures. In different parts of the continent, we can find everything from warrior cultures in which mature men sexually initiate youths, to examples of gender crossing. A decade ago, the varieties of African homosexuality were documented in the book *Boy-Wives and Female-Husbands*, edited by Will Roscoe and Stephen O. Murray.

Why, then, did opposition to gay rights become so critical for many African Christians? The answer has a lot to do with the rapid spread of Christianity on the continent in a relatively short time. In 1900, Africa had 10 million Christians, representing around 10 percent of the population. By 2000, that figure had grown to 360 million, or 46 percent. As a result, most African Christians today are first- or second-generation members of the faith, and many are adult converts. Sociologists generally agree that newer religious groups tend to have more literal approaches to scripture. In practice, of course, literalism still leaves plenty of room for debate and interpretation; but, when the Bible specifically condemns a particular sin—and same-sex interaction is repeatedly denounced in both the Old and New Testaments—that makes it difficult for literalists to find wiggle room.

In other ways, too, the rapid expansion of Christianity has conditioned African views on homosexuality. African churches exist in a ferociously competitive environment, one where traditional groups—like Anglicans and Catholics—must fight to maintain their market share against newer Pentecostal denominations, with their enticing promises of miracles and healings. The last thing the older churches need is a suggestion that their commitment to scriptural truth is anything less than absolute or that they are any less rigorous than their rivals in condemning sin.

The other key rival—and another factor shaping moral attitudes—is Islam. Over the past century, African Christianity has grown much more rapidly than Islam, a fact that puzzles and infuriates Muslims who regard the continent as naturally theirs. In 1900, for instance, Christians accounted for just 1 percent of the people of what would become the state of Nigeria; Muslims made up 26 percent. By 1970, however, the religions had achieved parity, each having around 45 percent of the population. And some recent polls suggest that, today, the nation has a Christian plurality. Against this background of rivalry and potential violence, Christians cannot be seen to concede anything to Muslims in terms of their commitment to strict morality. Even the harsh anti-gay measures that Akinola backs in Nigeria are still milder than the provisions enforced under the sharia code that prevails in one-third of the country's states, which includes

David Cowles

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How Has Christianity Changed over 2,000 Years?

Follow the story of Lost Christianities, an intriguing, 24-lecture series in audio or DVD

In the first centuries after Christ, there was no New Testament. However, books of Gospels, Acts, Epistles, and Apocalypses were widely read, and were fervently followed by groups of early Christians. But they would not be among the books that formed the New Testament.

From the many different scriptures then available, Christians held beliefs that today would be considered bizarre: that there were two, 12, or as many as 30 gods; that a malicious deity, rather than one true God, created the world; that Christ's death and resurrection had nothing to do with salvation—others insisted that Christ never really died at all.

What did these "other" scriptures say? Do they exist today? How could such outlandish ideas ever be considered Christian? If such beliefs were once common, why do they no longer exist? These are just a few of the many provocative questions that arise in **Lost Christianities: Christian Scriptures and the Battles over Authentication**.

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A major theme of this course is the struggle for orthodoxy—or right belief—among the various early Christian groups. You will witness the process by which certain Christian beliefs gained legitimacy, while others were relegated to the status of footnotes to history.

You will see how Christianity developed through its early and lost writings. The struggle for orthodoxy can be seen in both the New Testament and in central Christian creeds. You will explore the development of the New Testament into an approved canon of scripture.

How did the process of forming the orthodox canon take place? Who decided which books should be included? On what grounds? If so many scriptures existed, how do we know that those who selected the final books got it right? If many of these writings were forgeries, how can we be sure that forgeries weren't included in the New Testament?

In these lectures you will also hear about a remarkable archaeological event: the discovery in 1945 of a treasure trove of missing Gnostic scriptures at Nag Hammadi, an Egyptian village near the city of Luxor.

Consisting of 13 leather-bound volumes unearthed in an ancient grave by Bedouin camel drivers (the full story, which you will hear, resembles the plot of a bestselling adventure novel), the Nag Hammadi Library was a watershed event in the search for lost Christianities.

About Your Professor

Dr. Bart D. Ehrman is the James A. Gray Professor and Chair of the Department of Religious Studies at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He received his Masters of Divinity and Ph.D. from Princeton Theological Seminary. He has won several teaching awards, including the Students' Undergraduate Teaching Award and the Bowman and Gordon Gray Award for Excellence in Teaching. Professor Ehrman has written or edited more than 15 books, including *The New York Times* bestseller, *Misquoting Jesus,* and *Jesus: Apocalyptic Prophet of the New Millennium*.

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8. The Coptic Gospel of Thomas
9. Thomas' Gnostic Teachings
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11. The Gospel of Peter
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the death penalty for homosexuality. Moreover, by condemning sexual liberalism, African churches are making clear to their own members and their Muslim neighbors that they are not puppets of the West. Moral conservatism thus serves to assert cultural independence—a link that requires sexual immorality to be portrayed as a Euro-American import.

The Muslim context helps explain the sensitivity of gay issues in one other key respect. In the region later known as Uganda, Christianity first arrived in the 1870s, when the area was already under Muslim influence and a hunting ground for Arab slave-raiders. The king of Buganda had adopted Arab customs of pederasty, and he expected the young men of his court to submit to his demands. But a growing number of Christian courtiers and pages refused to participate, despite his threats, and an enraged king launched a persecution that resulted in hundreds of martyrdoms: On a single day, some 30 Bugandans were burned alive. Yet the area's churches flourished, and, eventually, the British expelled the Arab slavers. That foundation story remains well-known in the region, and it intertwines Christianity with resistance to tyranny and Muslim imperialism—both symbolized by sexual deviance. Reinforcing such memories are more recent experiences with Muslim tyrants, such as Idi Amin, whose victims included the head of his country's Anglican Church. For many Africans, then, sexual unorthodoxy has implications that are at once un-Christian, anti-national, and oppressive.

To be sure, Africa is a diverse continent, and some voices are more liberal on gay issues than others. Many of the most progressive can be found in South Africa, arguably one of the most gay-friendly countries in the world. Its constitution outlaws discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation, and, in 2006, the country legalized same-sex marriage. Many churches certainly opposed this latter measure, but the depth of feeling is nothing like what we find in a country like Nigeria. Anglican leader Desmond Tutu has spoken out for gay rights, declaring, "To penalize somebody for their sexual orientation is the same as what used to happen to black South Africans for something about which we could do nothing." Generally, bishops who do criticize homosexual behavior rank it low on their hierarchy of sins. The country's current Anglican primate, Njongonkulu Ndungane, calls homosexuality a "pastoral, secondary problem," and has rebuked Akinola for failing to address more pressing issues in his backyard.

One explanation for this phenomenon is that South Africa's unique history has given its leaders more room to promote tolerance on gay rights. After all, given the African National Congress's recent credentials in resisting white domination, the government can hardly be accused of passively succumbing to Western influence.

But South Africa is not the only place where gay-rights movements have gained a foothold. An Anglican group called Changing Attitude claims supporters in both Nigeria and Uganda, and the director of its Nigerian chapter, Davis Mac-Iyalla, has earned some notoriety as a liberal foil to Akinola. Some years ago, when Namibia's then-president declared homosexuality a "behavioral disorder which is alien to African culture," activists responded by creating a fairly overt gay-rights movement, the Rainbow Project.

At present, such voices constitute a distinct minority. That will not be the case forever, of course. As Christianity in Africa develops, churches will likely acquire a greater range of theological attitudes, including more moderate ones. Indeed, history suggests that fundamentalists often have good reason to worry about their more liberal grandchildren.

For now, though, gays in Africa face very real barriers to acceptance. And we do them no favors by viewing Africa's culture war over homosexuality as a mere extension of the battle we are witnessing here in the United States, rather than as a fight which raises questions unique to African history and politics. Trying to explain this can be a risky enterprise, as I learned first hand when I gave an interview explaining why Akinola felt as he did, only to find myself denounced for sharing his views. But, if an ever-larger share of the world's Christian population is going to be located in Africa—and it is—then we at least ought to understand the views of that population for what they are.

Philip Jenkins

Philip Jenkins is the author of God's Continent: Christianity, Islam and Europe's Religious Crisis.

World War V

My battle with Norman Podhoretz.

Norman Podhoretz has brought forth a new book called *World War IV: The Long Struggle Against Islamofascism*. The publication date, in case you might be inclined to miss the point, is September 11, the same date on which an adapted excerpt appeared on the op-ed page of *The Wall Street Journal*. There, to illustrate his polemic against anti-Americans past, present, and future, Podhoretz deployed a phrase, "a negative faith in America the ugly," of which the last three words, wearing nothing but inverted commas, did double duty as a headline. Podhoretz employed this phrase to suggest that the American left *tout court* was a wicked place where "not so long ago the American flag had been thought fit only for burning." He went on to write that this bad impulse was something "that [Todd Gitlin] and his comrades had tenaciously held onto for the past 40 years and more."

The phrase, you see, was my own. Here is the whole sentence to which it belonged when I wrote it for *Mother Jones* several years back: "But in the wake of September 11 there erupted something more primal and reflexive than criticism and hope—a kind of left-wing fundamentalism, a negative faith in America the ugly." And so, umbrage is what I took at Podhoretz's warped summary of my rejection of that negative faith.

Now, certainly one way in which democracy is messy is that, in the course of opposing bad policies, some dissenters lose their tempers, even their wits, and curse from top to bottom the nation that embraced its leaders' policies. Certainly this happened in the 1960s, as I have written at length. But, if the nature of Podhoretz's trickiness needs to be spelled out, it is this: Left-wing fundamentalism was not, and is not, the whole of the opposition to either the Vietnam or Iraq wars. On the left, after September 11, 2001, there was loathing of Islamism, there was reasoned criticism of Bush, there was intense patriotism, *and* there was left-wing fundamentalism. Moreover, the myopic and wrong-headed impulse to blame America first is not an unvarying constant—"tenaciously held onto," in Podhoretz's phrase—many former indulgers having long since gotten over it.

On reading "America the ugly," I went to the keyboard, wrote a version of the present response, and sent it the next day to the op-ed editor of the *Journal*,

ANTHONY RUSSO

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Why is the federal government waging war on medical marijuana patients in California and other states?

In flagrant disregard of California Law and the Los Angeles City Council, Federal Drug Enforcement Officials raid an exemplary medical marijuana dispensary.

Marijuana is the linchpin in the drug war. For seventy years it has been demonized as the "devil weed" that makes people go crazy.

But if marijuana indeed helps Uncle Ed with his chemo and Grandma with her arthritis, how can it be more dangerous than alcohol ...or even caffeine for that matter?* To maintain the "devil weed" myth the Feds have no choice. If they admit that marijuana has medical value, 70% of the war on drugs unravels.

And despite the wishes of 80% of Americans and the mountain of scientific evidence that marijuana is effective, the Feds continue to harass and prosecute patients.

Common Sense for Drug Policy
www.CommonSenseDrugPolicy.org www.DrugWarFacts.org
www.ManagingChronicPain.org www.MedicalMJ.org
www.TreatingDrugAddiction.org
www.info@csdp.org

* www.csdp.org/publicservice/compare2.htm

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Robert Pollock, after agreeing that my opposition to Podhoretz's abuse of my phrase would take second place to an argument about the anti-democratic lineage of the hoary stab-in-the-back accusation—the charge that wars like Vietnam and Iraq would be won were it not for the left undermining the nation. Ill-accustomed as I am to writing for the *Journal*, I thought such a piece worth attempting not only as a matter of personal privilege but because the issue at stake is substantial: whether Podhoretz is right to warn that the United States is going to be betrayed out of winning World War IV.

E-mail is marvelous. It took all of 14 minutes from the flick of my SEND button for Pollock to reply: "We're willing to print stuff that isn't on our line but this is way over the top. Much more vicious and uncharitable than the piece you're objecting to from Norman. And the stab in the back theme is a straw man. Sorry." Funny, but that straw man seems to be making his case on the *Journal* op-ed page on a regular basis.

A BIT OF BACKSTORY: Over the decades, Podhoretz has been insistently replaying the 40-year-old saga of his courageous escape from the prison house of radicalism and subsequent career as commissioner manqué of patriotic resolve. Revisiting the stations of his long march toward Damascus, he retraces in this op-ed his recovery from left-wing illusions. In a time-honored tradition, he assures us that, where once he was blind, now he can see—in fact, that his onetime blindness is the very certificate of his continuing 20–20 vision.

Show me anyone of a certain age who has nothing to live down about the '60s, and I'll show you a stone for the ages. But the lucidity of Podhoretz's memory may be conveyed by the fact that he writes that he is "haunted by one memory in particular" where he came to understand the dreadfulness of anti-American radicals. In a "drafty old hall on Union Square in Manhattan," he addressed "a meeting of left-wing radicals on a subject that had then barely begun to show the whites of its eyes: the possibility of American military involvement in a faraway place called Vietnam and the need to begin mobilizing opposition to it." His companion surveyed the "bedraggled-looking assemblage" and noted that "every young person in this room is a tragedy to some family or other." This meeting, he writes, took place *in 1960*—remarkable when you consider that John F. Kennedy was not yet in-

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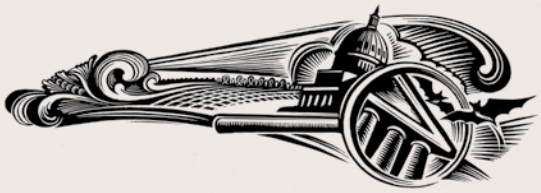
stalled in the White House and left-wing radicals, however farsighted they might have been, were not in the slightest interested in Vietnam, let alone any opposition to a yet unimaginable war there. Th is is the "one memory in particular" by which Podhoretz says he is "haunted."

We have been here before and we shall be here again, for the trope of unregenerate losers betraying their homeland is a staple of ideologues. In the which-side-are-you-on melodrama that Podhoretz embraces, the America-haters of the "domestic insurgency" lurk everywhere and all that they need for victory is that good men stand around doing nothing. In this stick-figure world, men like Bush and Cheney are at once principled, unabashed about their ambition, and properly appreciative of America's benison. By severe contrast, the ungrateful America-haters disguise their own will to power.

So it was too in the '60s, when Podhoretz came to understand that the abiding sin of his misguided circle was ingratitude for their great good luck in finding themselves living in the great field of ambition that constituted the heart of square America. Now, those squalid, dirty-minded, antinomians are back, this time disguised as tenured radicals, media heavies, and other latte-lapping moral relativists. Once more, they matter immensely. Th e nation's prospects in the current struggle, he writes in *World War IV*, "will depend at least as much on the war being waged on what in World War II was called the 'home front' as on the bloody battles being fought by our armed forces in the Middle East."

The awful trouble is, Iraq is not bound for glory. Psychologically, this poses a problem for true believers like Podhoretz. What better solution than to point a withering finger at the barbarians at home? Unable even to define war aims, let alone articulate a strategy for attaining them, incoherent even in naming the enemy, let alone defeating its successive incarnations, ever self-immunized from doubt, the passionate dogmatists who were responsible for the catastrophe in the first place are prone to explain their failure at the front as the result of betrayal behind their backs.

It is, as the Marxists used to say, no accident that the charge of stabs in the back has its origin in a defeated autocracy that badly overreached—imperial Germany after World War I. During those bitter years, Jews and leftists were the scapegoats of choice. The Germans, anxious amid the rubble of their



On the Hill

FRIENDLY FIRE

Soldiers, the must-have congressional accessory.

Last week, the day before a crucial anti-surge amendment proposed by Senator Jim Webb came up for a vote, Senator George Voinovich—a moderate Republican on the fence about whether to support the legislation—was besieged by lobbyists. Th ey were not the usual K Street denizens, though. Instead of silk-shirt-and-cigar chic and libertine conviviality, these people had a decidedly military aspect: Close-cropped hair. Great posture. Extreme politeness.

The veterans of the Iraq war had come for Voinovich, part of organized campaigns by both the anti-surge group VoteVets and the pro-war Vets for Freedom (VFF) to influence the fate of Webb's amendment. Although they're not supposed to lobby in their uniforms, the veterans were playing their combat experience to the hilt. "We use a lot of military philosophy" in approaching lawmakers, explains Shelly Burgoyne, a former Army officer now with VoteVets. Th at means breaking into squads, maintaining focus ("like on a road march"), and "no wacky hair." VFF even clad its troops in matching fatigues-brown polo shirts.

Until recently, veterans remained relatively quiescent on the nastier politics of the war on terrorism. But the fifth year of the Iraq war has brought not only a surge of American soldiers to Iraq, but a surge of Iraq veterans to Washington: For the Webb vote, 40 VoteVets members and 250 VFFers descended on Capitol Hill. Th ere were so many vets walking around last week that you could have mistaken the hallways of the House and Senate Offi ce Buildings for Camp Pendleton.

Not all the vets met with equal success. "We tried to do a sneak attack," says Burgoyne of an attempt to see Voinovich. But her platoon of six in favor of Webb failed to breach the senator's offi ce, while an anti-Webb detachment of veterans managed to slip inside for a chat.

Their attention to lawmakers is eagerly reciprocated. Fully aware of the status of combat experience as an argumentative trump card (what do you know about Iraq compared with somebody who actually fought there?) and the deference accorded a chest full of medals (*The New York Times* ran a graphic detailing David Petraeus's hardware just before his recent congressional appearance), politicians on both sides of the Iraq debate have been busy up-armoring themselves with veterans. At a recent Iraq-boosting rally on the Senate lawn featuring the VFF and John McCain, Senator John Cornyn explained the appeal of the vets arrayed behind him: "Th ey've walked the walk." At a parallel VoteVets photo op with congressional Democrats, Senator Dick Durbin, his podium barnacled with veterans, stressed the importance of letting vets spend time with their families. "We should never take advantage of the fact that [the veterans] are flesh and blood," he said, apparently without noticing any irony.

Th e problem here, of course, is that, while veterans seem to put the stamp of unimpeachable truth on any argument about Iraq, different veterans are making very different arguments. On this battlefield, who beats whom?

Earlier this year, it was the anti-Iraq contingent that had more veterans speaking out on its side, thanks to VoteVets's hearty opposition to the surge on the Hill and in TV ads—a dynamic that surely irked Republicans used to strong support from the military community. It also irked VFF's Pete Hegseth, a perky former Army lieutenant who served in Baghdad and Samarra and received the Bronze Star. (Inspired to join VFF after Bush announced his surge strategy, Hegseth ascended quickly through its ranks to become director in May.)

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"They had co-opted the debate!" he recalls angrily. "When [VoteVets] gets on Capitol Hill—they just don't represent most veterans, but they purport to." To make matters worse, as spring turned into summer, a narrative of growing military dissatisfaction with Iraq seemed to be taking shape, encapsulated in a front-page *New York Times* story that ran the very same day Bush had to present a report on Iraqi benchmarks to Congress: AS LOVED ONES FIGHT ON, WAR DOUBTS ARISE, it blared. Hegseth posted the story on the conservative blog *Townhall.com* to help lure pro-war vets to Washington.

Arriving here en masse last week, the VFF vets discovered that it is sweet to bear the message people want to hear. With lawmakers looking to shore up the fragile hope Petraeus had given them the week before, VFF was able to get meetings with 40 senators or their staff, a big uptick from a similar campaign they ran in July. While VoteVets's welcome involved a meal with one-time presidential candidate Wesley Clark at a McCormick & Schmick's in Crystal City, the VFF vets were treated to a breakfast on the South Lawn of the White House, where they were served fresh figs and pastries and got to shake President Bush's hand for "what seemed like three hours," exults David Elwell, who served in Balad and is now with a VFF-associated vets' group.

Now it is VFF whose position seems more secure. At the VFF rally, John Soltz, the head of VoteVets, stood off to the side, regarding a scraggly line of anti-Iraq protesters mournfully and expressing the wish that he and Hegseth would make nice. "Pete, I talk to him sometimes, I respect [his] opinion," says Soltz. Does Hegseth return Soltz's warm feelings? "No," Hegseth says dismissively. "John Soltz is a fixture with Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid."

But it's not always so easy for Hegseth's comrades to dismiss the opposition. VFF likes to call its behavioral creed "the opposite of Code Pink"—a reference to the loud and wackily attired protest group—which means stoic rectitude in the face of antiwar types. While the protesters heckled the VFF rally, "our people stood there silently," Hegseth explains. But that wasn't entirely true. Most of the pro-surge veterans behaved well, but one grim-faced crew in the back of the crowd tussled with two men in Iraq Veterans Against the War T-shirts who had shown up to watch quietly. The police ended up ejecting the two men across the lawn, where they had to stand in exile with the ladies in googly glasses and pink face-paint.

Hot emotions are understandable here. Each veterans' group claims to represent the opinion not just of certain veterans but of "Iraq vets" as a whole class. This is partly a political tactic—who would listen to a group called "A Few Iraq Veterans for Freedom"?—but it also reflects the veterans' sincere conviction that their stance reflects the only honest conclusion to be drawn from the Iraq experience. Some Iraq vets I talked to were even skeptical that their political opponents could actually *be* real veterans. "A lot of those people weren't Iraq or Afghanistan vets," said VoteVets member Andrew Horne of the men and women at the VFF rally. "I know they're wearing the shirts, but I saw a lot of guys who were older than my Dad."

So which group really does speak for those who have fought in Iraq? A widely cited *Military Times* poll taken last December found that 72 percent of active-duty soldiers thought the war was spreading the force too thin. But, somewhat confusingly, half the respondents also said we should deploy *more* troops to Iraq. In the end, it "depends on how you ask the question," admits Adriel Domenech, VFF's spokesman. Do you want to go home? "Of course" can get a troop counted among the ranks of the dissatisfied. Do you want to give up? "Well, hell no!" can make you a supporter of a policy that would have us in Iraq for decades. This ambiguity reflects the broader political landscape of the war: Battle lines are starkly drawn, but, behind them, the combatants hold views more similar—and complicated—than they are willing to let on. Most want to leave. Few want to fail.

Military experience—or support from those who have it—cannot resolve that paradox. Maybe that's why appeals from veterans have begun to blur together. The day after his meeting with VFF vets, Voinovich voted against the Webb amendment—just as the group had wanted. But VFF shouldn't take too much credit. A Voinovich aide contacted shortly after the vote recalled that some veterans had indeed visited the senator—they were "very respectful," he said. But, as for which group they were from or what creed they espoused, he couldn't remember.

Eve Fairbanks

ANTHONY RUSSO

defunct ruling ideology, vulnerable to the dark arts of propaganda, were riled up against inconvenient dissenters.

The United States has proved no exception to the same cycles of blame. For aren't Americans born to be winners? Can anything but internal demons explain why we don't always succeed? Thus did the Maoist takeover of China and the stalemate in Korea fan the flames of McCarthyism. Thus, too, did eventual American exit from Vietnam spawn the Rambo legend, recently recycled by President Bush, that the United States was winning the war until the military was betrayed by civilian meddlers, ignorant pointy-headed bureaucrats throwing their weight around from Washington, D.C.

Today, it is the bogeyman of troop-betrayal that gets wheeled out to shield the administration and its supporters from the consequences of their own deception, corruption, incompetence, and delusions of progress.

THE LAST TIME I corresponded with a *Wall Street Journal* op-ed editor, it was September 20, 2001, the editor was Max Boot, and he sought me out because I had been quoted in *USA Today* saying that protesters "had a right to be skeptical" of U.S. foreign policy but also had "a responsibility to suggest realistic alternatives" to war, and that the nation had "a right of self-defense," albeit "restrained and focused," in the face of attack. Was I interested, Boot asked, in writing "about how you've gone from being an antiwar activist to being in favor of war in this circumstance?"

I wrote back that, while I had "many criticisms of some current antiwar arguments … to say that I'm 'in favor of war' is not accurate." I told him I wanted to write a piece "with due complexity." Boot wrote back: "This isn't quite as clear cut as I was hoping for so guess we'll pass."

Todd Gitlin

Todd Gitlin is professor of journalism and sociology at Columbia University. He is the author, most recently, of The Bulldozer and the Big Tent: Blind Republicans, Lame Democrats, and the Recovery of American Ideals.

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You deserve a factual look at . . .

Arab-Moslem Fanaticism and Intransigence

Are they the root cause of Mid-East turmoil?

For the last six decades, the world has been convinced, mostly because of unrelenting Arab propaganda, that the conflict between Israel and the "Palestinians" is the root cause of the constant turmoil in the Middle East and that Israel should make "concessions" to the Arabs. But is that the real reason for the turmoil and for the violence? Or is there another much deeper, more fundamental reason behind it?

What are the facts?

Islam's hatred against the West. Americans are reluctant to criticize or even to discuss the religions of others. We consider it a personal matter. But the hatred of the Muslim-Arab world against the West, especially against the United States (the "Great Satan") and Israel (the "Little Satan"), can only be explained by comprehending the psychology and the principal religious tenets of Islam. Islam is a world-wide religion, but it originated in Arabia and it survives in Arabia in its purest form, unaffected by any outside influences. The policies of the Arab countries are dominated by Islam. Islam believes itself to be in possession of the holy truth, in the name of which any act of violence is permitted and encouraged. It is only with that understanding that the acts of savagery, the suicide bombers in Israel, the bombing of the World Trade Center, and other acts of murderous fanaticism all over the world can be explained.

> "The real cause of the never-ending turmoil in the Middle East is the unremitting desire of still most Muslim-Arab states to destroy Israel…"

Rise and decline of the Arab Muslims. For the first six centuries after the Muslims spilled forth from Arabia, they conquered much of the world. The Arab Muslims did in their ascendancy give rise to a substantial civilization. But, beginning with their expulsion from Spain, a long decline set in that lasted until the early 20th century. That decline was the more bitter, because it was inflicted by the despised "infidels." It was something that had to be remedied by whatever means. Injured pride had to be salved; the enemies who caused this humiliation and this injury had to be destroyed.

The 20th century brought national independence to the Arab states. Two other fundamental events occurred: 1) The discovery of the world's largest oil deposits under the Arabian peninsula, and 2) The creation, in 1948, of the state of Israel, which ever since its birth has been the concentrated focus of the hatred and venom of all Muslim Arabs, a hatred that unites them, that even surpasses their hatreds against each other, and that has launched them into five disastrous wars against Israel. Even the rape of Kuwait by Saddam Hussein's Iraq was explained as being a step towards the "liberation of Palestine," a claim so bizarre, so patently absurd, that it can only be comprehended and given credence by a mind obsessed with the ideology of Arab Islam.

Muslim Arabs obsessed with Israel. The obsession of the Muslim Arabs with Israel is totally irrational. To have Israel as an independent country in the middle of the Arab-Muslim world is utterly intolerable to them. That is the reason that, making allowance for the very cold peace with Egypt and the more recently concluded peace with Jordan, the 21 Arab states, among them the richest countries in the world, with a combined population of more than 200 million and with a land area greater than that of the U.S., have concentrated obsessive ferocity by military, economic, ideological, political, diplomatic, and any other means to destroy the tiny Jewish community of Palestine, and its successor, the Jewish state of Israel—only 7 million people, in a country just one-half the size of San Bernardino County in California.

Acts of terror in the United States, Argentina, England, and Israel have sobered many who had believed the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to be the cause for the unrest in the Middle East. The fact is that war is endemic in the Arab world and that the Muslim Arabs have been waging war against each other and against their non-Arab neighbors for centuries. But, as much as the Muslim Arabs hate each other, most of them are united in their greater hatred against the "infidel Jews" and their tiny country, and they have built vast war machines for the ultimate "jihad" to nuke the Jews, to poison them by chemicals or biologicals, or to chase them into the sea. The focus on the Palestinian-Israel conflict plight is designed to divert attention from the many domestic and inter-Arab problems, and to direct the Muslim-Arab frustration against Israel, the "infidel Western outsider." The suggestion that Israel divest itself from its historic heartland, the 2,362 sq. mi. "West Bank," and from the Golan would lead to strategic suicide. The real cause of the never-ending turmoil in the Middle East is the unremitting desire of still most of the Arab-Muslim states to destroy Israel, their inability to come to terms with its very existence. That hatred and that intolerance are fueled by Arab-Muslim fanaticism and intransigence and unwillingness to accept diversity in the region. Only when that will be overcome can peace and tranquility finally come to the Middle East.

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Hope Sinks

The disappointingly conventional Obama campaign.

MICHAEL CROWLEY

A few weeks ago, Barack Obama added a new coda to his stump speech. In the telling, versions of which I heard about six times earlier this month, Obama wakes up at the crack of dawn. His staff reminds him that, for reasons he can't remember, he has promised to visit a supporter in the tiny town of Greenwood, South Carolina, more than an hour's drive from where he has overnighted. Departure time: six a.m. He opens the morning's paper to find "a bad story" about himself. Tired and cranky, he steps out into a downpour, and his umbrella blows inside out. On the interminable drive, "my staff's not talking to me because they know I'm in a bad mood." Obama arrives at a small building to find a mere 20 supporters. "And they don't look too happy to be there, either." The mood shifts, however, when an elderly woman in the back strikes up a call-and-response cheer. "Fire it up!" she shouts. "Ready to go!" answers the group. Obama describes being baffled at first. But then, he says, "I'm startin' to feel fired up! I'm feeling ready to go!" At big rallies, the recitation of the anecdote culminates with Obama himself leading a spirited call and response with his crowd. "Fire it up!" "Ready to go!" "Fire it up!" "Ready to go!"

It's an uplifting story. But it's also, notably, one about a cranky candidate who needs firing up in the first place. I saw hints of this while traveling with Obama in Iowa in September. Before taking questions from an audience, Obama usually seeks to preempt long-winded queries by reminding the crowd of a few ground rules, including that "I'm the only one who gets to make a speech." It's a reasonable request, perhaps, but one most politicians resist. Instead, Obama repeats it. At a riverside rally in Davenport, he teased an African American World War II veteran for "giving such a long speech." It was a light moment, but, the next day, Obama was at it again. At a bucolic Maquoketa park, a woman stood up holding a prewritten question. "I'm very nervous," she said. Obama told her not to be, but, when he saw her holding a handwritten question, he blurted, "I hope that doesn't take up the whole page!" In a quavering voice, the woman offered a rambling account of struggling through economic insecurity. "So, you want me to *focus* on the economy?" Obama asked. He proceeded to recount his six-point economic plan—bloodlessly skipping past the woman's personal distress. Lip-biting empathy this was not.

Obama actually lost his cool a few days later, at a rally in Washington, D.C. The lanky senator was in the middle of charging up a large and enthusiastic crowd with a riff about reforming politics when he suddenly stopped and looked down at a small group of people near the edge of his stage who had been making noise. "I'm sorry—do you guys want to get up here and speak?" Obama scolded sarcastically, his words booming through downtown Washington. After a brief, awkward pause he carried on—but with his concentration broken and at a slightly cooler temperature.

To be sure, Obama is hardly some Cheney-esque sourpuss; he's usually pretty chipper—if subdued—on the stump. But it's easy to understand why Obama might often find himself in a bad mood these days. Back when he launched his campaign, he promised it would be something different: an experiment in electoral politics that would discard the cynical tropes of consultant-driven electioneering. In place of slash-and-burn tactics, he would conduct something more rarefied, a mix of inspiring rhetoric and high-level discussion. Obama's February announcement speech in Springfield, Illinois bemoaned "the smallness of our politics—the ease with which we're distracted by the petty and trivial, our chronic avoidance of tough decisions, our preference for scoring cheap political points instead of rolling up our sleeves and building a working consensus to tackle big problems."

This critique made for a lyrical book, *The Audacity of Hope*, and elicited record donations. But it's been little match for the Hillary Clinton machine. Obama trails Hillary by as much as 20 points in national polls—and even more in some New Hampshire surveys. The limitations of Obama's unconventional campaign are now setting him toward a less audacious style of politics. Having failed to sweep Democrats off their collective feet with his message of hope, Obama's fate will hinge less on sunny lyricism than on a cruder brand of politics, one more be-

Brooks Kraft

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fitting past paint-by-numbers candidates like John Kerry or Richard Gephardt than any political messiah. By adopting these conventional tactics, the Obama campaign has a plausible, albeit daunting, path to the nomination. But it does raise an important question, one that occurred to me as I watched his flashes of grumpiness: Can he stomach it?

When Obama joined the race, there were two basic pillars to his candidacy. One of them was that he presents a young face in contrast to the timeworn Clinton brand (not to mention the coterie of drab white men in the field). The other was that Obama was the only serious candidate to oppose the Iraq war from the very beginning. Back when antiwar liberals constantly heckled Hillary at public appearances, this second factor might have been a silver bullet. But Clinton has repositioned herself as a devoutly antiwar candidate. The number-one item on a list of top "10 Reasons to support Hillary Clinton" on her website is "To end the war in Iraq," and polls now show that

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Hillary is the top choice of Democratic voters for whom ending the war is the highest priority. Hillary has turned voter fatigue over her checkered 14 years in Washington into an asset, beating Obama in the "experience" debate. And, most recently, the slick rollout of her health care campaign flipped that issue from a black mark on her record into what polls show to be another source of strength.

While the press has marveled at the deftness of Clinton's maneuvers, she has had some help. Namely, for many months, her rhetoric has gone largely unchallenged by her closest competitor. Though Obama often snipes at Hillary as a Washington insider who would be a divisive candidate, he rarely does so by name or with a pointed edge that might put her on the defensive. In fact, Obama has carefully distanced himself from his campaign's two significant clashes with Hillary. After David Geffen trashed the Clintons in a Maureen Dowd column last February, the two campaigns scuffled in the press, leading Obama to declare, "We have to be careful not to slip into playing the game as it customarily is played." And, after his campaign sent reporters a ham-fisted opposition-research document linking Clinton ("D-Punjab") to the outsourcing of jobs in India, Obama called the memo "stupid and caustic" and rebuked his staff. "Clinton's baiting Obama into a unilateral nonaggression pact was maybe the single most race-changing event we've seen," says an aide from a third campaign.

There's a recent antecedent for this pacifist style: Bill Bradley's campaign against Al Gore. Like Obama, Bradley campaigned on poetic themes of hope and changing the political status quo. And, like Obama, Bradley disdained negative campaigning. Whereas Obama posits the "politics of hope" against the "politics of fear," Bradley spoke of "a contrast between a politics that's nothing but tactics, and a politics that's based on ideals and beliefs." To one veteran of the Bradley campaign, Obama is making a grave mistake. "You cannot, in a competitive Democratic primary, create 'a new kind of politics,'" says Michael Powell, a former senior adviser to Bradley. "It leads to a warped logic that you end up not defending your own positions and you don't challenge the views of your opponents." Bradley, at least, organized his campaign around a universal health care plan that challenged Gore's cautious piecemeal approach; Obama has no contrast-drawing policy equivalent. From the future of Iraq to health care to tax policy, Obama's plans are either similar to or less ambitious than those of his opponents.

Obama aides scold the Washington press for obsessing over attack politics. "Folks in Washington get so whipped up about the lack of hand-to-hand combat," chides Obama spokesman Bill Burton. But there's evidence that Obama's poor polling is leading him toward tougher rhetoric. Recently, he noted that "both parties" have failed to enact universal health care or energy independence—a swipe at Bill Clinton's legacy—and took another shot at the Clintonites by bashing "people who think politics is a game." A key question is whether Obama will finally launch a caustic television ad—perhaps aimed at Hillary's war vote. But that line of assault would come with clear perils. "The press keeps saying 'He's got to attack her, he's got to attack her,'" adds Michael Powell. "And, eventually, he may get pushed into that. And, when he finally does, they'll say, 'You said you wanted to create a new kind of politics!'"

Recently, I visited Obama's sprawling headquarters, located on the eleventh floor of a downtown Chicago high-rise that offers grand views of the city's skyline. I ran into Obama's wiry campaign manager, David Plouffe, chatting in a doorway. I mentioned to Plouffe that I had just returned from Iowa. "Iowa—that's the whole shebang!" he said. Then he paused. "I guess I'm not supposed to say that," he added with a grin. "But Iowa is very important." In a recent memo e-mailed to campaign supporters, he all but predicted that an Iowa win would translate to victory in New Hampshire. "Clinton will pay a severe price for not winning Iowa," Plouffe asserts.

Although the national press has coronated Hillary Clinton as the field's clear front-runner, the picture is quite different in Iowa, whose early-January caucuses will be the first test of the season. Everyone agrees that the state remains a three-way tie between Obama, Clinton, and John Edwards (who effectively moved to the state after 2004—such is the benefit of not having a real day job), with vast numbers of Iowans saying they haven't made up their minds.

It may be Obama's salvation that Iowa is the one place where Clinton's methodical precision hasn't been evident. Some Iowans may have been miffed this spring when a memo leaked from her campaign arguing that she should skip the caucuses altogether. The memo conceded that Hillary "will not have a financial advantage or an organizational advantage over any of our opponents" that would enable a decisive win. Soon after, Clinton shook up her Iowa staff. But that didn't solve all the problems: In a little-noted move last month, Clinton's deputy state director and caucus manager, Angelique Pirozzi, also left the campaign. (It's not clear whether Pirozzi quit or was fired, although, shortly before her departure, *The Des Moines Register* published a letter to the editor from a walk-in Clinton volunteer saying he decided to support Obama after seeing three Clinton field workers reduced to tears by "the abuse they took" from superiors.)

Not only is Hillary vulnerable in Iowa, Obama has an impressive operation there. It includes 31 field offices—nearly double the number for any other campaign, according to the estimate of one Obama aide. The campaign also brags about its performance at the mid-September steak fry hosted by Senator Tom Harkin, where Obama grandly marched in at the head of a throng of supporters that numbered roughly 3,000—perhaps a quarter of the event's overall attendance. This may have amounted to little more than peacock strutting, but everyone had an interest in showing the best feathers.

When describing their Iowa strategy, Obama aides inevitably begin to wax enthusiastic about their courtship of younger voters, notorious caucus absentees. One prime target: high school students. "The biggest untold story of the Iowa caucus is that you only have to be eighteen by the general election to participate," says Hans Reimer, former political director of MTV's Rock the Vote and now an Obama organizer. Although Iowa has nearly 40,000 high school seniors, only "a couple hundred" caucused in 2004. Reimer says that online social networking forums like Facebook mean that, "for the first time, we know who these kids are" and can actually organize them. ("Barack Stars," the campaign calls its contingent of students.) This is important given that caucus-goers are generally older—nearly two-thirds in 2004 were at least 50 years old—a cohort that disproportionately favors Hillary Clinton. "Senator Obama has reached out and excited folks who haven't traditionally caucused," says former Iowa Democratic chairman Gordon Fischer, who recently endorsed Obama. Fischer recalls being amazed at a turnout of 10,000 people at a recent rally in Iowa City: "That was just unheard of! The sixty-four-thousand-dollar question is whether he can get them to show up on caucus night." Of course, that was the same question Howard Dean faced four years ago.

It seems that Howard Dean has deeply influenced the evolution of Obamaland. The Dean campaign, of course, reveled in its unconventionality. Led by

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its jocular guru, Joe Trippi, the campaign claimed to break the rules of American politics. And its headquarters reflected this freewheeling spirit. It was packed with rookies, geeks, and offbeat characters like Internet organizer Zephyr Teachout.

Obama appears to have studied the Dean model—and run in the other direction, despite the many similarities between the antiwar, anti-Washington messages of the two campaigns. An organizational flow chart tells you everything you need to know. His chief strategist, David Axelrod, is a product of cutthroat Chicago politics who worked for John Edwards in 2004. Obama's campaign manager, David Plouffe, managed Richard Gephardt's 2004 presidential bid and ran the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee before that. Senior strategist and adman Jim Margolis is a top adviser to Senate Democrats and cut spots for John Kerry in the last election. Obama's press aides are drawn from Capitol Hill, including communications director Robert Gibbs, who worked in Obama's Senate office and, before that, on the Kerry campaign.

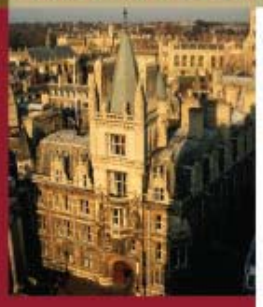
In other words, it's no wonder the campaign has taken such a conventional turn. That's the organization's true character. And, in this case, it might not be such a bad thing. As Obama aides point out, while voters know everything there is to know about Hillary, they're still hardly acquainted with Obama—beyond the image of "a black guy who gave a great speech," as one of his advisers put it to me. Before his Iowa events, for instance, aides lead an "Obama trivia" quiz, in which supporters are asked his favorite board game (Scrabble) and first real job (community organizer). That means Obama still has a chance to break through with the public. But he'll only have that chance if he wins Iowa. And doing so may require attacking Hillary, as well as deploying old-fashioned methods for dragging voters to the caucuses—a methodology that Axelrod and company know from hoary experience.

While these tactics may come naturally to Obama's operatives, they may not come as easily to the candidate. Even as his campaign has launched new offensives against Hillary, he remains curiously unable to utter her name in a harsh context. In mid-September, I attended an address Obama delivered about the Iraq war. The speech was filled with passages, clearly aimed at Clinton, about how politicians with "experience" in Washington "failed to ask hard questions" on the eve of the American invasion. But her name never passed Obama's lips. Instead, Obama seemed to be relying on the location of his speech—the town of Clinton, Iowa—to make his point. Yet few Iowa papers gave the Clinton angle much attention, focusing instead on his plan for withdrawal for Iraq, which itself doesn't differ much from Hillary's.

Obama is the truest believer in his crusade to transform American politics—the truest believer in the "audacity of hope." In his book of the same name, Obama writes passionately about the coarsening effect of the political process—and negative campaigning in particular. He laments the way politicians' "mistakes [are] trumpeted, their words distorted, and their motives questioned." He asks, "What happened to make these men and women appear as the grim, uncompromising, insincere and occasionally mean characters that populate our nightly news?" Fear of becoming this stock character courses through his prose.

Ultimately, then, the fate of his campaign hinges on his internal monologue. Can he accept running a campaign that doesn't match his high-minded ideals—one that may come down to attack ads and a gritty Iowa ground game? And will he understand that people are trying to get him "fired up" because they're worried he hasn't done it on his own? ◆

Templeton-Cambridge Journalism Fellowships in Science & Religion



"If there's one intellectual topic that's starting to blaze red hot, it is the relationship between science and religion."

Gregg Easterbrook, *Los Angeles Times*

The fellowship, funded by the John Templeton Foundation, enables ten print, broadcast, or online journalists to pursue an intensive two-month course of study in issues of science and religion. The program includes three weeks of seminars at the University of Cambridge in the U.K. featuring eminent authorities in the field. Fellows will be paid a stipend in addition to travel expenses to Cambridge.

"Mind-stretching, eye-opening enlightenment. The best kind of enlightenment. I came with answers and left with questions."

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2006 Templeton-Cambridge Fellow

"Between the rigid literalists and the ranting atheists, there is vast space for intellectual engagement over matters of science and faith—a space we explored daily during this stimulating and intense fellowship."

Sharon Schmickle, *Minneapolis Star Tribune*
2007 Templeton-Cambridge Fellow

The fellowship seeks to promote a deeper understanding and a more informed public discussion of the interface of science and religion. Potential areas of study include comparison of the methods of science and religion, neuroscience, cosmology, quantum uncertainty, and spirituality and health.

Applicants must demonstrate an interest in the field, originality of thought displayed in previous writings, and a superior record of journalistic achievement. The awards are open to journalists with a minimum of three years' experience, though priority willbe given to mid-career and senior journalists. The fellowship program is looking for journalists who show promise of making a significant contribution to the public's understanding of the complex issues in the field.

The application deadline is Saturday, December 8, 2007
For more information, or to apply for the fellowships, go to the website www.templeton-cambridge.org

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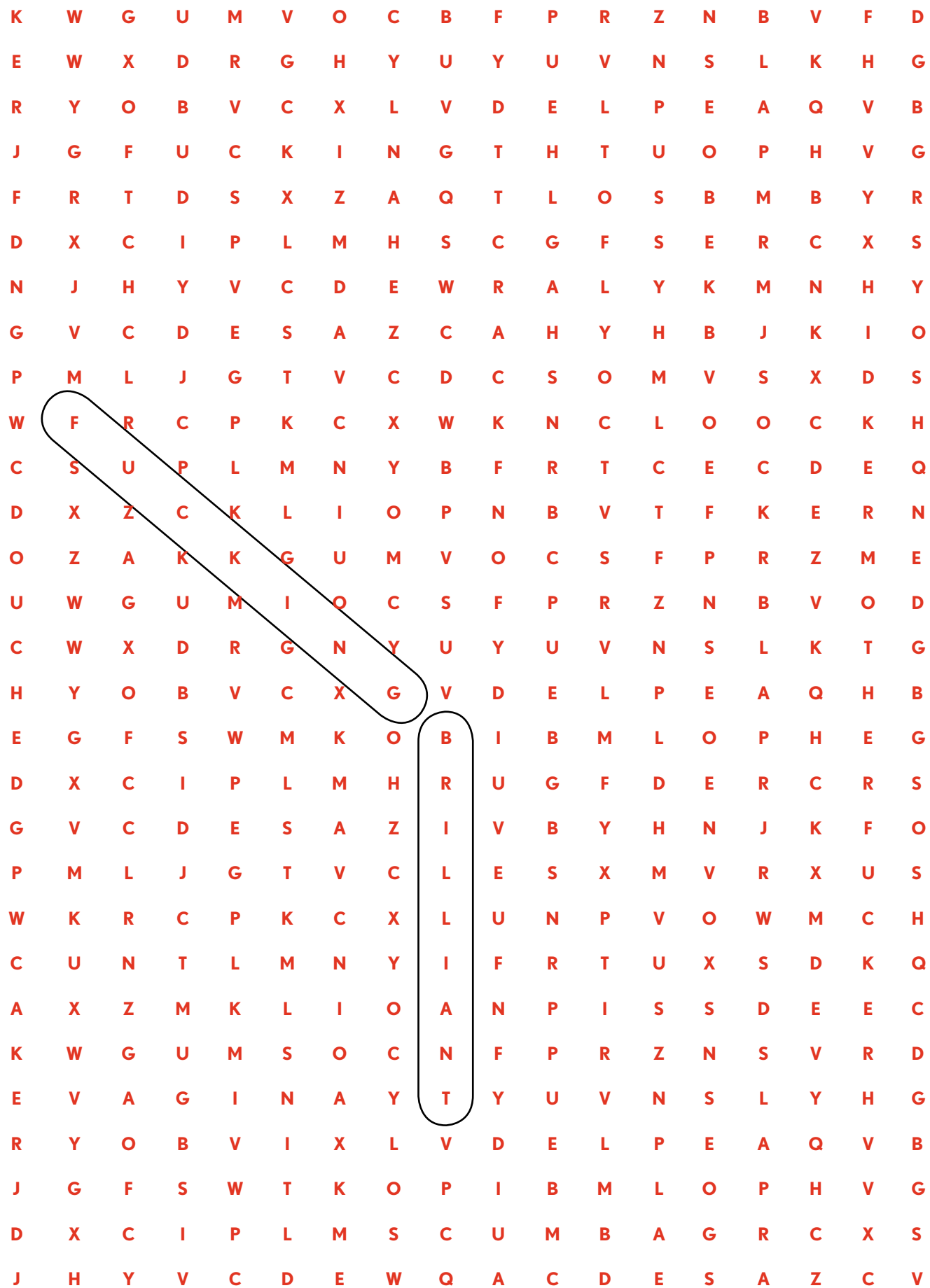
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What the F***?

Why we curse.

STEVEN PINKER

Fucking became the subject of congressional debate in 2003, after NBC broadcast the Golden Globe Awards. Bono, lead singer of the mega-band U2, was accepting a prize on behalf of the group and in his euphoria exclaimed, "This is really, really, fucking brilliant" on the air. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC), which is charged with monitoring the nation's airwaves for indecency, decided somewhat surprisingly not to sanction the network for failing to bleep out the word. Explaining its decision, the FCC noted that its guidelines define "indecency" as "material that describes or depicts sexual or excretory organs or activities" and Bono had used *fucking* as "an adjective or expletive to emphasize an exclamation."

Cultural conservatives were outraged. California Representative Doug Ose tried to close the loophole in the FCC's regulations with the filthiest piece of legislation ever considered by Congress. Had it passed, the Clean Airwaves Act would have forbade from broadcast

> the words "shit", "piss", "fuck", "cunt", "asshole", and the phrases "cock sucker", "mother fucker", and "ass hole", compound use (including hyphenated compounds) of such words and phrases with each other or with other words or phrases, and other grammatical forms of such words and phrases (including verb, adjective, gerund, participle, and infinitive forms).

The episode highlights one of the many paradoxes that surround swearing. When it comes to political speech, we are living in a free-speech utopia. Late-night comedians can say rude things about their nation's leaders that, in previous centuries, would have led to their tongues being cut out or worse. Yet, when it comes to certain words for copulation and excretion, we still allow the might of the government to bear down on what people can say in public. Swearing raises many other puzzles—linguistic, neurobiological, literary, political.

The first is the bone of contention in the Bono brouhaha: the syntactic classification of curse words. Ose's grammatically illiterate bill not only misspelled *cocksucker*, *motherfucker*, and *asshole*, and misidentified them as "phrases," it didn't even close the loophole that it had targeted. The Clean Airwaves Act assumed that *fucking* is a participial adjective. But this is not correct. With a true adjective like *lazy*, you can alternate between *Drown the lazy cat* and *Drown the cat which is lazy*. But *Drown the fucking cat* is certainly not interchangeable with *Drown the cat which is fucking*.

If the *fucking* in *fucking brilliant* is to be assigned a traditional part of speech, it would be adverb, because it modifies an adjective and only adverbs can do that, as in *truly bad*, *very nice*, and *really big*. Yet "adverb" is the one grammatical category that Ose forgot to include in his list! As it happens, most expletives aren't genuine adverbs, either. One study notes that, while you can say *That's too fucking bad*, you can't say *That's too very bad*. Also, as linguist Geoffrey Nunberg pointed out, while you can imagine the dialogue *How brilliant was it? Very*, you would never hear the dialogue *How brilliant was it? Fucking*.

The FCC's decision raises another mystery about swearing: the bizarre number of different ways in which we swear. There is cathartic swearing, as when we slice our thumb along with the bagel. There are imprecations, as when we offer advice to someone who has cut us off in traffic. There are vulgar terms for everyday things and activities, as when Bess Truman was asked to get the president to say *fertilizer* instead of *manure* and she replied, "You have no idea how long it took me to get him to say *manure*." There are figures of speech that put obscene words to other uses, such as the barnyard epithet for insincerity, the army acronym *snafu*, and the gynecological-flagellative term for uxorial dominance. And then there are the adjective-like expletives that salt the speech and split the words of soldiers, teenagers, and Irish rock-stars.

But perhaps the greatest mystery is why politicians, editors, and much of the public care so much. Clearly, the fear and loathing are not triggered by the concepts themselves, because the organs and activities they name have hundreds of polite synonyms. Nor are they triggered by the words' sounds, since many of them have respectable homonyms in names for animals, actions, and even people. Many people feel that profanity is self-evidently corrupting, especially to the young. This claim is made despite the fact that everyone is familiar with the words, including most children, and that no one has ever spelled out how the mere hearing of a word could corrupt one's morals.

Progressive writers have pointed to this gap to argue that linguistic taboos are absurd. A true moralist, they say, should hold that violence and inequality are "obscene," not sex and excretion. And yet, since the 1970s, many progressives have imposed linguistic taboos of their own, such as the stigma surrounding the N-word and casual allusions to sexual desire or sexual attractiveness. So even people who revile the usual bluenoses can become gravely offended by their own conception of bad language. The question is, why?

The strange emotional power of swearing—as well as the presence of linguistic taboos in all cultures—suggests that taboo words tap into deep and ancient parts of the brain. In general, words have not just a denotation but a connotation: an emotional coloring distinct from what the word literally refers to, as in *principled* versus *stubborn* and *slender* versus *scrawny*. The difference between a taboo word and its genteel synonyms, such as *shit* and *feces*, *cunt* and *vagina*, or *fucking* and *making love*, is an extreme example of the distinction. Curses provoke a different response than their synonyms in part because connotations and denotations are stored in different parts of the brain.

The mammalian brain contains, among other things, the limbic system, an ancient network that regulates motivation and emotion, and the neocortex, the crinkled surface of the brain that ballooned in human evolution and which is the seat of perception, knowledge, reason, and planning. The two systems are interconnected and work together, but it seems likely that

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words' denotations are concentrated in the neocortex, especially in the left hemisphere, whereas their connotations are spread across connections between the neocortex and the limbic system, especially in the right hemisphere.

A likely suspect within the limbic system is the amygdala, an almond-shaped organ buried at the front of the temporal lobe of the brain (one on each side) that helps invest memories with emotion. A monkey whose amygdalas have been removed can learn to recognize a new shape, like a striped triangle, but has trouble learning that the shape foreshadows an unpleasant event like an electric shock. In humans, the amygdala "lights up"—it shows greater metabolic activity in brain scans—when the person sees an angry face or an unpleasant word, especially a taboo word.

The response is not only emotional but involuntary. It's not just that we don't have earlids to shut out unwanted sounds. Once a word is seen or heard, we are incapable of treating it as a squiggle or noise; we reflexively look it up in memory and respond to its meaning, including its connotation. The classic demonstration is the Stroop effect, found in every introductory psychology textbook and the topic of more than four thousand scientific papers. People are asked to look through a list of letter strings and to say aloud the color of the ink in which each one is printed. Try it with this list, saying "red," "blue," or "green" for each item in turn from left to right:

red blue green blue green red

Easy. But this is much, much, harder:

red blue green blue green red

The reason is that, among literate adults, reading a word is such an overlearned skill that it has become mandatory: You can't will the process "off," even when you don't want to read the words but only pay attention to the ink. That's why you're helped along when the experimenters arrange the ink into a word that also names its color and slowed down when they arrange it into a name for a different color. A similar thing happens with spoken words as well.

Now try naming the color of the ink in each of these words:

cunt shit fuck tits piss asshole

The psychologist Don MacKay has done the experiment and found that people are indeed slowed down by an involuntary boggle as soon as the eyes alight on each word. The upshot is that a speaker or writer can use a taboo word to evoke an emotional response in an audience quite against their wishes. Thanks to the automatic nature of speech perception, an expletive kidnaps our attention and forces us to consider its unpleasant connotations. That makes all of us vulnerable to a mental assault whenever we are in earshot of other speakers, as if we were strapped to a chair and could be given a punch or a shock at any time. And this, in turn, raises the question of what kinds of concepts have the sort of unpleasant emotional charge that can make words for them taboo.

The historical root of swearing in English and many other languages is, oddly enough, religion. We see this in the Third Commandment, in the popularity of *hell*, *damn*, *God*, and *Jesus Christ* as expletives, and in many of the terms for taboo language itself: *profanity* (that which is not sacred), *blasphemy* (literally "evil speech" but, in practice, disrespect toward a deity), and *swearing*, *cursing*, and *oaths*, which originally were secured by the invocation of a deity or one of his symbols.

In English-speaking countries today, religious swearing barely raises an eyebrow. Gone with the wind are the days when people could be titillated by a character in a movie saying "Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn." If a character today is offended by such language, it's only to depict him as an old-fashioned prude. The defanging of religious taboo words is an obvious consequence of the secularization of Western culture. As G. K. Chesterton remarked, "Blasphemy itself could not survive religion; if anyone doubts that, let him try to blaspheme Odin." To understand religious vulgarity, then, we have to put ourselves in the shoes of our linguistic ancestors, to whom God and Hell were a real presence.

Say you need to make a promise. You may want to borrow money, and so must promise to return it. Why should the promisee believe you, knowing that it may be to your advantage to renege? The answer is that you should submit to a contingency that would impose a penalty on you if you did renege, ideally one so certain and severe that you would always do better to keep the promise than to back out. That way, your partner no longer has to take you at your word; he can rely on your self-interest. Nowadays, we secure our promises with legal contracts that make us liable if we back out. We mortgage our house, giving the bank permission to repossess it if we fail to repay the loan. But, before we could count on a commercial and legal apparatus to enforce our contracts, we had to do our own self-handicapping. Children still bind their oaths by saying, "I hope to die if I tell a lie." Adults used to do the same by invoking the wrath of God, as in *May God strike me dead if I'm lying* and variations like *As God is my witness*, *Blow me down!*, and *God blind me!*—the source of the British *blimey*.

Such oaths, of course, would have been more credible in an era in which people thought that God listened to their entreaties and had the power to carry them out. Even today, witnesses in U.S. court proceedings have to swear on the Bible, as if an act of perjury undetected by the legal system would be punished by an eavesdropping and easily offended God. But, even if these oaths aren't seen as literally having the power to bring down divine penalties for noncompliance, they signal a distinction between everyday assurances on minor favors and solemn pledges on weightier matters. Today, the emotional power of religious swearing may have dimmed, but the psychology behind it is still with us. Even a parent without an inkling of superstition would not say "I swear on the life of my child" lightly. The mere thought of murdering one's child for ulterior gain is not just unpleasant; it should be unthinkable if one is a true parent, and every neuron of one's brain should be programmed against it.

This literal unthinkability is the basis of the psychology of taboo in general, and it is the mindset that is tapped in swearing on something sacred, whether it be a religious trapping or a child's life. And, thanks to the automatic nature of speech processing, the same sacred words that consecrate promises—the oath-binding sense of "swearing"—may be used to attract attention, to shock, or to inflict psychic pain on a listener—the dirty-word sense of "swearing."

As secularization has rendered religious swear words less powerful, creative speakers have replaced them with words that have the same degree of affective clout according to the sensibilities of the day. This explains why taboo expressions can have such baffling syntax and semantics. To take just one example, why do people use the ungrammatical *Fuck you*? And why does no one have a clear sense of what, exactly, *Fuck you* means? (Some people guess "fuck yourself," others "get

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fucked," and still others "I will fuck you," but none of these hunches is compelling.) The most likely explanation is that these grammatically baffling curses originated in more intelligible *religious* curses during the transition from religious to sexual and scatological swearing in English-speaking countries:

> Who (in) the hell are you? >> Who the fuck are you?
>
> I don't give a damn >> I don't give a fuck; I don't give a shit.
>
> Holy Mary! >> Holy shit! Holy fuck!
>
> For God's sake >> For fuck's sake; For shit's sake.
>
> Damn you! >> Fuck you!

Of course, this transmutation raises the question of why words for these particular concepts stepped into the breach—why, for example, words for bodily effluvia and their orifices and acts of excretion became taboo. *Shit*, *piss*, and *asshole*, to name but a few, are still unspeakable on network television and unprintable in most newspapers. *The New York Times*, for example, identified a best-seller by the philosopher Harry Frankfurt as *On Bull****.

On the whole, the acceptability of taboo words is only loosely tied to the acceptability of what they refer to, but, in the case of taboo terms for effluvia, the correlation is fairly good. The linguists Keith Allan and Kate Burridge have noted that *shit* is less acceptable than *piss*, which in turn is less acceptable than *fart*, which is less acceptable than *snot*, which is less acceptable than *spit* (which is not taboo at all). That's the same order as the acceptability of eliminating these substances from the body in public. Effluvia have such an emotional charge that they figure prominently in voodoo, sorcery, and other kinds of sympathetic magic in many of the world's cultures. The big deal that people ordinarily make out of effluvia—both the words and the substances—has puzzled many observers. After all, we are incarnate beings, and excretion is an inescapable part of human life.

The biologists Valerie Curtis and Adam Biran identify the reason. It can't be a coincidence, they note, that the most disgusting substances are also the most dangerous vectors for disease. Feces is a route of transmission for the viruses, bacteria, and protozoans that cause at least 20 intestinal diseases, as well as ascariasis, hepatitis A and E, polio, amebiasis, hookworm, pinworm, whipworm, cholera, and tetanus. Blood, vomit, mucus, pus, and sexual fluids are also good vehicles for pathogens to get from one body into another. Although the strongest component of the disgust reaction is a desire not to eat or touch the offending substance, it's also disgusting to *think* about effluvia, together with the body parts and activities that excrete them. And, because of the involuntariness of speech perception, it's unpleasant to hear the words for them.

Some people have been puzzled about why *cunt* should be taboo. It is not just an unprintable word for the vagina but the most offensive epithet for a woman in America. One might have thought that, in the male-dominated world of swearing, the vagina would be revered, not reviled. After all, it's been said that no sooner does a boy come out of it than he spends the rest of his life trying to get back in. This becomes less mysterious if one imagines the connotations in an age before tampons, toilet paper, regular bathing, and antifungal drugs.

The other major source of taboo words is sexuality. Since the 1960s, many progressive thinkers have found these taboos to be utterly risible. Sex is a source of mutual pleasure, they reason, and should be cleansed of stigma and shame. Prudery about sexual language could only be a superstition, an anachronism, perhaps a product of spite, as in H. L. Mencken's definition of *puritanism* as "the haunting fear that someone, somewhere, may be happy."

The comedian Lenny Bruce was puzzled by our most common sexual imprecation. In a monologue reproduced in the biopic *Lenny*, he riffs:

> What's the worst thing you can say to anybody? "Fuck you, Mister." It's really weird, because, if I really wanted to hurt you, I should say "Unfuck you, Mister." Because "Fuck you" is really *nice*! "Hello, Ma, it's me. Yeah, I just got back. Aw, fuck you, Ma! Sure, I mean it. Is Pop there? Aw, fuck you, Pop!"

Part of the puzzlement comes from the strange syntax of *Fuck you* (which, as we saw, does not in fact mean "Have sex"). But it also comes from a modern myopia for how incendiary sexuality can be in the full sweep of human experience.

Consider two consenting adults who have just had sex. Has everyone had fun? Not necessarily. One partner might see the act as the beginning of a lifelong relationship, the other as a one-night-stand. One may be infecting the other with a disease. A baby may have been conceived, whose welfare was not planned for in the heat of passion. If the couple is related, the baby may inherit two copies of a deleterious recessive gene and be susceptible to a genetic defect. There may be romantic rivals in the wings who would be enraged with jealousy if they found out, or a cuckolded husband in danger of raising another man's child, or a two-timed wife in danger of losing support for her own children. Parents may have marriage plans for one of the participants, involving large sums of money or an important alliance with another clan. And, on other occasions, the participants may not both be adults, or may not both be consenting.

Sex has high stakes, including exploitation, disease, illegitimacy, incest, jealousy, spousal abuse, cuckoldry, desertion, feuding, child abuse, and rape. These hazards have been around for a long time and have left their mark on our customs and our emotions. Thoughts about sex are likely to be fraught, and not entertained lightly. *Words* for sex can be even more touchy, because they not only evoke the charged thoughts but implicate a sharing of those thoughts between two people. The thoughts, moreover, are shared "on the record," each party knowing that the other knows that he or she has been thinking about the sex under discussion. This lack of plausible deniability embroils the dialogue in an extra layer of intrigue.

Evolutionary psychology has laid out the conflicts of interest that are inherent to human sexuality, and some of these conflicts play themselves out in the linguistic arena. Plain speaking about sex conveys an attitude that sex is a casual matter, like tennis or philately, and so it may seem to the partners at the time. But the long-term implications may be more keenly felt by a wider circle of interested parties. Parents and other senior kin may be concerned with the thwarting of their own plans for the family lineage, and the community may take an interest in the illegitimate children appearing in their midst and in the posturing and competition, sometimes violent, that can accompany sexual freedom. The ideal of sex as a sacred communion between a monogamous couple may be old-fashioned and even unrealistic, but it sure is convenient for the elders of a family and a society. It's not surprising to find tensions between individuals and guardians of the community over casual talk about sex (accompanied by hypocrisy among the guardians when it comes to their own casual sex).

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Another sexual conflict of interest divides men from women. In every act of reproduction, females are committed to long stretches of pregnancy and lactation, while males can get away with a few minutes of copulation. A male can have more progeny if he mates with many females, whereas a female will not have more progeny if she mates with many males—though her offspring will do better if she has chosen a mate who is willing to invest in them or can endow them with good genes. Not surprisingly, in all cultures men pursue sex more eagerly, are more willing to have casual sex, and are more likely to seduce, deceive, or coerce to get sex. All things being equal, casual sex works to the advantage of men, both genetically and emotionally. We might expect casual *talk* about sex to show the same asymmetry, and so it does. Men swear more, on average, and many taboo sexual terms are felt to be especially demeaning to women—hence the old prohibition of swearing "in mixed company."

A sex difference in tolerance for sexual language may seem like a throwback to Victorian daintiness. But an unanticipated consequence of the second wave of feminism in the 1970s was a revived sense of offense at swearing, the linguistic companion to the campaign against pornography. As a result, many universities and businesses have published guidelines on sexual harassment that ban telling sexual jokes, and, in 1993, veteran *Boston Globe* journalist David Nyhan was forced to apologize and donate $1,250 to a women's organization when a female staffer overheard him in the newsroom using the word *pussy-whipped* with a male colleague who declined his invitation to play basketball after work. The feminist writer Andrea Dworkin explicitly connected coarse sexual language to the oppression of women: "Fucking requires that the male act on one who has less power and this valuation is so deep, so completely implicit in the act, that the one who is fucked is stigmatized."

Though people are seeing, talking about, and having sex more readily today than they did in the past, the topic is still not free of taboo. Most people still don't copulate in public, swap spouses at the end of a dinner party, have sex with their siblings and children, or openly trade favors for sex. Even after the sexual revolution, we have a long way to go before "exploring our sexuality" to the fullest, and that means that people still set up barriers in their minds to block certain trains of thought. The language of sex can tug at those barriers.

Which brings us back to *fucking*—Bono's *fucking*, that is. Does a deeper understanding of the history, psychology, and neurobiology of swearing give us any basis for deciding among the prohibitions in the Clean Airwaves Act, the hairsplitting of the FCC, and the libertinism of a Lenny Bruce?

When it comes to policy and law, it seems to me that free speech is the bedrock of democracy and that it is not among the legitimate functions of government to punish people who use certain vocabulary items or allow others to use them. On the other hand, private media have the prerogative of enforcing a house style, driven by standards of taste and the demands of the market, that excludes words their audience doesn't enjoy hearing. In other words, if an entertainer says *fucking brilliant*, it's none of the government's business; but, if some people would rather not explain to their young children what a blow job is, there should be television channels that don't force them to.

What about decisions in the private sphere? Are there guidelines that can inform our personal and institutional judgments about when to discourage, tolerate, and even welcome profanity? Here are some thoughts.

Language has often been called a weapon, and people should be mindful about where to aim it and when to fire. The common denominator of taboo words is the act of forcing a disagreeable thought on someone, and it's worth considering how often one really wants one's audience to be reminded of excrement, urine, and exploitative sex. Even in its mildest form, intended only to keep the listener's attention, the lazy use of profanity can feel like a series of jabs in the ribs. They are annoying to the listener and a confession by the speaker that he can think of no other way to make his words worth attending to. It's all the more damning for writers, who have the luxury of choosing their words off-line from the half-million-word phantasmagoria of the English language.

Also calling for reflection is whether linguistic taboos are always a bad thing. Why are we offended—why *should* we be offended—when an outsider refers to an African American as a *nigger*, or a woman as a *cunt*, or a Jewish person as a *fucking Jew*? I suspect that the sense of offense comes from the nature of speech recognition and from what it means to understand the connotation of a word. If you're an English speaker, you can't hear the words *nigger* or *cunt* or *fucking* without calling to mind what they mean to an implicit community of speakers, including the emotions that cling to them. To hear *nigger* is to try on, however briefly, the thought that there is something contemptible about African Americans and thus to be complicit in a community that standardized that judgment into a word. Just hearing the words feels morally corrosive. None of this means that the words should be banned, only that their effects on listeners should be understood and anticipated.

Also deserving of reflection is why previous generations of speakers bequeathed us a language that treats certain topics with circumspection and restraint. The lexical libertines of the 1960s believed that taboos on sexual language were pointless and even harmful. They argued that removing the stigma from sexuality would eliminate shame and ignorance and thereby reduce venereal disease, illegitimate births, and other hazards of sex. But this turned out to be mistaken. Sexual language has become far more common since the early '60s, but so has illegitimacy, sexually transmitted disease, rape, and the fallout of sexual competition like anorexia in girls and swagger-culture in boys. Though no one can pin down cause and effect, the changes are of a piece with the weakening of the fear and awe that used to surround thoughts about sex and that charged sexual language with taboo.

Those are some of the reasons to think twice about giving carte blanche to swearing. But there is another reason. If an overuse of taboo words, whether by design or laziness, blunts their emotional edge, it will have deprived us of a linguistic instrument that we sometimes sorely need. And this brings me to the arguments on the pro-swearing side.

To begin with, it's a fact of life that people swear. The responsibility of writers is to give a "just and lively image of human nature," as poet John Dryden wrote, and that includes portraying a character's language realistically when their art calls for it. When Norman Mailer wrote his true-to-life novel about World War II, *The Naked and the Dead*, in 1948, his compromise with the sensibilities of the day was to have soldiers use the pseudo-epithet *fug*. (When Dorothy Parker met him, she said, "So you're the man who doesn't know how to spell *fuck*.") Sadly, this prissiness is not a thing of the past: Some public television stations today fear broadcasting Ken Burns' documentary on World War II because of the salty language in his interviews with veterans. The prohibition against swearing in broadcast media makes artists and historians into liars and subverts the respon-

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sibility of grown-ups to learn how life is lived in worlds distant from their own.

Even when their characters are not soldiers, writers must sometimes let them swear in order to render human passion compellingly. In the film adaptation of Isaac Bashevis Singer's *Enemies: A Love Story*, a sweet Polish peasant girl has hidden a Jewish man in a hayloft during the Nazi occupation and becomes his doting wife when the war is over. When she confronts him over an affair he has been having, he loses control and slaps her in the face. Fighting back tears of rage, she looks him in the eye and says slowly, "I saved your life. I took the last bite of food out of my mouth and gave it to you in the hayloft. I carried out your *shit*!" No other word could convey the depth of her fury at his ingratitude.

For language lovers, the joys of swearing are not confined to the works of famous writers. We should pause to applaud the poetic genius who gave us the soldiers' term for chipped beef on toast, *shit on a shingle*, and the male-to-male advisory for discretion in sexual matters, *Keep your pecker in your pocket*. Hats off, too, to the wordsmiths who thought up the indispensable *pissing contest*, *crock of shit*, *pussy-whipped*, and *horse's ass*. Among those in the historical record, Lyndon Johnson had a certain way with words when it came to summing up the people he distrusted, including a Kennedy aide ("He wouldn't know how to pour piss out of a boot if the instructions were printed on the heel"), Gerald Ford ("He can't fart and chew gum at the same time"), and J. Edgar Hoover ("I'd rather have him inside the tent pissing out than outside pissing in").

When used judiciously, swearing can be hilarious, poignant, and uncannily descriptive. More than any other form of language, it recruits our expressive faculties to the fullest: the combinatorial power of syntax; the evocativeness of metaphor; the pleasure of alliteration, meter, and rhyme; and the emotional charge of our attitudes, both thinkable and unthinkable. It engages the full expanse of the brain: left and right, high and low, ancient and modern. Shakespeare, no stranger to earthy language himself, had Caliban speak for the entire human race when he said, "You taught me language, and my profit on't is, I know how to curse." ◆

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The Mulligan

Getting HillaryCare right. Finally.

JONATHAN COHN

Everybody knows how much contempt conservatives show for Hillary Clinton whenever she talks about health care. But people tend to forget how much liberals have been deriding her, too. It was just a few months ago that Michael Moore attacked her in *Sicko*, alleging that campaign contributions from people in the health care business had made her a tool of that industry. Last week, when asked about Clinton and health care, John Edwards made a similar charge, pointedly noting that, "in order to have universal health care, you have to be willing to take on … insurance companies, drug companies, and their lobbyists." In other words, *he* would deliver what Hillary could not.

By unveiling a new health care plan last week that did, in fact, promise to cover every single American, Clinton put to rest the worst of these suspicions. But, even after last Monday's blockbuster roll-out—which provoked a press frenzy rare for what was, after all, a policy speech—questions remained. It is one thing to put these ideas on paper. But just how serious is she about them, particularly given all her talk about the "scars" she has from 1993 and 1994, the "lessons" she learned from that episode, and the need for "consensus" this time around? If compromise is necessary, then what, specifically, is she willing to compromise away? Enacting universal health care is bound to mean waging some fights. Is she really willing to do that—and which fights will she pick?

Those were the questions I hoped to ask Clinton in a telephone interview a few days after the announcement—although, truth be told, I didn't expect many answers. Mine was one of a series of interviews she was doing during the week, leading up to a string of appearances on five Sunday morning talk shows. By the time I talked to her, she had already dispensed plenty of carefully calibrated, almost perfectly anodyne, statements: "I've learned some valuable lessons"; "This is not a government-run health care system"; "I know how important it is to work with the Congress."

The start of my interview played out the same way. To a question about when she had first sat down to seriously discuss with her staff what this new plan would look like, she gave the boilerplate version of her health care resumé: "I've been committed to universal health care for fifteen years. When we weren't successful after '93 and '94, I kept working to try to expand coverage"—and so on. But then she shifted gears, and, over the next few minutes, as we discussed both the details of what she had proposed and her ideas about how to make it law, she gave some answers I hadn't expected. In the process, she put to rest many of my lingering doubts while demonstrating what may be her strongest assets as a champion of health care reform: her unrivaled mastery of the subject and her savvy sense of how to move a proposal through Congress.

Does this mean Clinton is the best candidate on health care? Not necessarily. But it may help explain why she's running such a strong campaign among Democratic primary voters right now. The assumption going into this race was that Clinton would position herself as the centrist alternative to her chief rivals, Edwards and Barack Obama. But on health care, which has emerged as the campaign's top domestic issue, she's positioned herself as far to the left as they have—offering a plan of similar reach and pledging to push it with similar political will—while managing to stay within the boundaries of what passes for mainstream political debate. You could say this reflects a welcome and politically viable consensus on how Democrats should approach health care in the coming years—or, if you're disappointed in the substance of what she's proposing, you could say it reflects a failure by both Edwards and Obama to stretch the boundaries of debate further. Either way, though, it means she's winning over liberal primary voters even as she positions herself for both the general election and—should she win—a battle to actually enact health care reform. That's no small feat.

It's not hard to see how the 1993–1994 debacle shaped Clinton's thinking on health care—and, in certain critical ways, how it reduced

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her ambitions. Most notably, she has decided against blowing up the existing health care system, even though there's a pretty good case for doing so on the merits. As she learned the hard way in 1993–1994, starting from scratch would force the majority of Americans to switch coverage, thereby scaring the very large portion of the U.S. population that already has some form of insurance and likes it. So, this time, Clinton is doing her best to reassure those folks. If you have health insurance and you're pleased with it, she says, that's fine—you get to keep it. But, if you don't have insurance or you don't like the coverage you have, then you could buy new insurance on your own. You would do it through a purchasing pool set up and maintained by the government—selecting from a choice of plans in much the same way federal workers and employees of large companies do now. You'd get the same sort of benefits these people get: No insurer could deny you coverage or charge you more because of your medical conditions, and the prices would be more affordable because of the relatively low overhead. And, if you were still too poor to afford this coverage, the government would give you financial assistance while continuing to make Medicaid and other safety-net programs available to the very poor.

This might like seem like precisely the sort of plan that would disappoint at least some traditional supporters of universal coverage—namely, those who believe the best systems are those run directly by the government, or so-called "single-payer" systems. That's because the new Clinton scheme assumes most working-age people will continue to get private health insurance. (To many single-payer advocates, this was precisely the problem with the old Clinton scheme, too: It relied on private insurers, not the government, to deliver coverage for most people.) But there's another wrinkle in Clinton's proposal. Among the insurance options she'd make available to people would be a plan run by the government, perhaps using the basic Medicare model. The idea would be to let this public program operate alongside the private ones—in effect, competing with them for business. If the public program were as efficient and popular as advocates of public insurance believe it will be—and, for the record, I'm one of those advocates—then, over time, it would attract more and more people, naturally evolving into a single-payer system.

None of this makes Clinton unique among her rivals. Both Edwards, who unveiled his plan in February, and Obama, who introduced his in May, offer essentially the same deal to the insured—allowing them to keep their coverage while the government constructs and oversees a new system for everyone else. Both Edwards and Obama also have public insurance options that open a door to single-payer—a model that bears the intellectual fingerprints of Yale professor and sometime TNR contributor Jacob Hacker, who has met with all three campaigns. Clinton's plan does have one key difference with Obama's: She would require everyone to get some kind of coverage, a requirement known as an "individual mandate." Obama decided against calling for a mandate initially, preferring to wait and see whether it was really necessary for achieving universal coverage—and until he knew for sure that insurance would be affordable for everyone required to buy it. But, while that's not a minor difference, in the grand scheme of things it's not a colossal one, either. Meanwhile, the differences between what Clinton proposed and what Edwards proposed are downright miniscule. In fact, the plans are virtually identical.

The lack of huge substantive differences in these plans makes it all the more important to figure out which candidates will push their proposals with maximum determination. And, here, Edwards has set a pretty high standard. Not only was he the first major candidate to put forward a serious plan to cover every American; he has also made clear it's his top priority by, among other things, pledging that he would pursue universal coverage even if it meant postponing some progress on deficit-reduction. Obama, too, has cautioned that health care expansions may have to come before complete budget balance. But, it turns out, Clinton pretty much shares this view. While she told me she is determined to make some progress on reducing the deficit—she very deliberately did not use all of the savings from President Bush's expiring tax cuts to pay for her plan—she agrees that establishing universal health care may have to precede balancing the budget outright, if only because you can't do the latter until you get medical costs (which drive up the price of government programs) under control. "I think we've got to begin making a down payment on fiscal responsibility, but it has to come over time," Clinton said. "If you don't get … quality, affordable care to everybody, you can't realize a lot of the savings that will help you with deficit-reduction, with Medicare, Medicaid, and other programs."

Although Clinton constantly invokes the need for having an open mind while dealing with former adversaries in Congress, she also says that universal coverage is a core principle with which she's not prepared to part. "We have to remain committed to the goal of quality affordable care for everybody," she told me. "That has to be one of those principles that

HillaryCare's namesake, then and now.

AP PHOTO/J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE; AP PHOTO/M. SPENCER GREEN

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we'd take into whatever the negotiations are." Similarly, for all of Clinton's talk about consensus, she's not particularly tolerant of the insurance industry—or, at least, the way it practices business now. "Remember," she said, "this is an industry that spends $50 billion a year excluding people, either altogether, by denying them coverage, or by denying them care that they need."

Clinton leaves open the possibility that the industry could retool itself so that insurers compete on cost and quality rather than on their ability to pick out the most healthy beneficiaries (the way they typically do now). This was, she explained during the interview, a new "business opportunity" just waiting for smart companies to take advantage of it. But she also seemed to recognize that doing so runs against the nature of many insurers today—noting that even some of the industry's erstwhile allies in the corporate world are getting fed up. "I think there's an awareness," she said, speaking of CEOs she's met, "that the health insurance industry is not working in a way that makes economic sense for the rest of the economy—and I think that's a revelation for them."

That's a clever rhetorical construction: It pits the interests of the business community against the interests of the insurance industry, effectively splitting the traditional opposition to universal coverage. And it may hint at the political strategy Clinton intends to pursue if she gets elected. While she isn't signaling compromise on universal coverage or going soft on insurers, she is embracing business—constantly invoking the wisdom of CEOs, talking up the need to establish partnerships with them, and tailoring her proposal with their companies' needs in mind. Clinton would require all larger firms to contribute toward their workers' health benefits. But she would let these firms provide workers with coverage directly (rather than simply pay a tax) if that's the company's preference—because, she notes, even CEOs frustrated with rising benefit costs "still want to have control." Firms with fewer than 25 employees would be exempt from the requirement to pay for health insurance, although, if these firms did offer their workers insurance, they would get a tax credit.

That last part seems to be a unique feature of Clinton's plan; neither Edwards nor Obama have indicated they would let firms with so many employees off the hook (although they would give those firms access to much cheaper insurance than they can get now). And, substantively speaking, that's a serious concession. According to Professor Jonathan Gruber of MIT, such a large exemption concedes about two-thirds of the total available revenue from employers. In other words, Clinton gives up a large pot of money—money necessary to finance the subsidies for low-income people—that she then must find elsewhere. (She finds most of it through efficiency gains.) Clinton's advisers say the difference isn't as stark as it seems, since most other proposals would end up easing at least some of the burden on small businesses—generally by exempting or subsidizing the very smallest employers. Whatever the impact in terms of dollars, though, the decision to avoid slapping small-business owners with a requirement to pay for health care seems to be primarily political. The small-business lobby played a pivotal role in bringing down the old Clinton plan. And, while some of this opposition reflected nothing more than ideology, much of it stemmed from that plan's small-business mandate. In one of the most memorable episodes of that fight, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce effectively reversed itself—backing out of a planned endorsement of a mandate on business—because a rival organization, the National Federation of Independent Business, was winning over members who wanted no part of such a requirement.

Taken together, these moves suggest a divide-and-conquer strategy, in which Clinton would try to pry the business community from the ranks of the determined opposition. And this may reflect the influence of Clinton's uniquely experienced advisers. All three Democrats have turned to the same informal network of health-care experts for ongoing counsel—people like Gruber and Hacker and the New America Foundation's Len Nichols. And all three candidates have smart people working exclusively for them. But it was Clinton who inherited the senior staff from her husband's White House, including Chris Jennings and Gene Sperling, who spent years figuring out how to navigate legislation through a hostile Congress. (Whether that experience is helpful today depends, admittedly, on just how good you feel about the old Clinton era.)

Of course, the degree to which Hillary relies on these and other advisers is open to question. "A lot of people ask me, who is Senator Clinton's closest health adviser," says Nichols, who was first called to brief her about two years ago. "The truth is, Senator Clinton does not really need a lot of health advising. … She has what we health policy wonks do for a living down cold."

Make no mistake, Clinton still carries into the fight on health care plenty of political liabilities, starting with her lack of sheer oratorical talent. She can't exude passion and empathy the way Edwards (or her husband) can; she can't convincingly offer soaring, transformational rhetoric like Obama. Those are no small things, given the necessity of rallying public support to overcome hostile special interests. Moreover, Clinton starts with a greater reservoir of ill will than either one of her rivals. Consider a recent Zogby poll commissioned by *Forbes Small Business*. The poll asked small-business owners about their attitudes on health care reform and discovered a discernible turn to the left. Not only was the cost of health care their top political concern, but a plurality, 34 percent, said they thought the best solution was to have the government step in and somehow make sure everybody got insurance. "Small-business owners normally fear and loathe the government," John Zogby, whose polls have tracked small business owners since 2000, told the magazine. "But, in this instance, we could be at a tipping point caused by health care insecurity." That's good news for fans of universal health care, but not, as it turns out, for Clinton—because, when Zogby asked about presidential candidates, she finished first in both the "least favorite candidate" and the "least likely to do something for small business" categories. And which Democrat did they feel was most likely to help small business? Edwards. Obama, meanwhile, fared better than not only all other Democrats but also the leading Republicans in the favorability category.

Then again, Clinton has already proven capable of winning over fans in surprising quarters. On *The New York Times* op-ed page last week, the accolades for her health care plan from David Brooks were no less strong than those from Paul Krugman. E.J. Dionne had only good things to say about her in *The Washington Post*, which perhaps isn't so surprising. But Brit Hume was also praising her on Fox News, which most certainly is. The rap on Hillary Clinton has always been that she lacks her husband's political dexterity. But, too often during the 1990s, Bill's trademark triangulation succeeded only in angering both sides of the political divide. With her health care roll-out, Hillary has done the opposite: generated serious enthusiasm from observers across the ideological spectrum. If she can keep that up, she'll go very far indeed. ◆

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Robert Risko

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Losing It

The bearable lightness of Mike Huckabee.

D. T. MAX

"What do you have to lose? Some weight? Maybe a little bit of time. But most important, you might want to lose some of those bad habits that are keeping you from successfully losing weight and getting on the path to forever fitness. . . . I can now share some changes I experienced that I never thought were possible. . . . I spent the first forty-eight years of my life doing almost everything possible to model bad habits. At times, I believe that the transformation I've experienced is nothing short of miraculous." — from *Quit Digging Your Grave with a Knife and Fork: A 12-Step Program to End Bad Habits and Begin a Healthy Lifestyle* by Mike Huckabee.

1.
Stop Listening to Destructive Criticism

Mike Huckabee, the two-term ex-governor of Arkansas, is an implausible presidential contender. With a folksy demeanor, domestic policy expertise, and a background as a Baptist preacher, he is the conservative Bill Clinton, the other man from Hope. But there's another Clinton running for the job. And, with the war in Iraq on center stage, this is a year in which a candidate's foreign policy experience is likely to make the difference. While Huckabee can point to some impressive achievements as governor, those aren't familiar to most voters—rather, the Arkansan is best known for losing 110 pounds and writing a successful book about it.

Still, over the past few months, Huckabee the candidate has had a miraculous transformation. In January, when he began his campaign, not even Iowa evangelicals knew his name. His poll number was an asterisk. Just eight months later—not long after telling a group of Iowans, "I want to confound the conventional wisdom. I want this election to be so inexplicable that it would have the signature of grace to it"—Huckabee finished second to Mitt Romney in the Iowa straw poll. He spent just $150,000, a fraction of the $5 million Romney was estimated to have spent, and he trounced fellow Midwestern religious conservative Sam Brownback in the process. Huckabee is now the leader of the second tier of candidates, behind Rudy Giuliani, Fred Thompson, Romney, and the fading John McCain, with a chance of eventually joining them. "You gotta admit, for what we had to work with, the resources we had, for us to surge, coming in second, is the victory; it is the story," he told reporters.

Clearly, there's been more than just grace at work.

2.
Stop Allowing Food to Be a Reward

Bettendorf, Iowa, is a town of some 33,000 people (city-sized in Iowa) on the Illinois border. It's one of the Quad Cities, with an aging rust-belt population: antiabortion, anti-NAFTA. So far today, Huckabee has visited the Crowne Plaza in Cedar Rapids and the Stoplight café in Tipton ("Where Dreams Come True"), where people mostly seemed to come for the free food, but now he is in his element, at Trinity at Terrace Park Hospital, a large brick and glass–type medical complex. The hospital has invited anyone curious about the governor to hear Huckabee tell his story, and 40 or so have responded. Most are seniors. The people are spread out at tables festooned not with campaign literature but with blood sugar control suggestions. Huckabee, handsome and slim in a white shirt and dark suit, stands at a podium and begins his weight-loss sermon. "I tell people," he says in his easy-going, radio-trained voice, "the easiest definition is this: If it comes through a car window, it isn't food." He pauses and gets his laugh. Then Huckabee continues, "I don't eat fried food. Now, I gotta tell you, that's pretty hard to do, but everybody can engage in some activity and everyone can take control of these kinds of things." Before he exits, he stops and has some melon slices from the health spread the hospital has laid out—it is the one time on the campaign trail I see him eat.

Huckabee has made such stops to talk about weight loss a regular feature of his campaign; they account for maybe 50 percent of his speeches. But how to be slimmer is also a favorite subject at his political rallies. In fact, everywhere I went with Huckabee, I met people who had lost weight thanks to *Quit Digging*. What excites his readers is the book's focus on changes in lifestyle instead of calorie counting. "I [do] not have a weight goal but rather a health and fitness goal," Huckabee writes in *Quit Digging*—old stuff in Manhattan, maybe, but not at the local Baptist church.

An Oprah-ish personal story about food addiction—he calls himself a "recovering foodaholic"—is a strange basis for a presidential campaign, to be sure. But Huckabee's upbeat tale of reform and self-restraint has surprising traction with voters in the plus-size Bible Belt. There's his delivery: warm, not too hard a sell. There's his prodigious shedding of pounds. But what makes his pitch compelling is what the weight-loss tale tells you about the core of the man himself.

3.
Stop Making Excuses

It's February and we are at the Sperling breakfast, a Washington rite of passage sponsored by *The Christian Science Monitor*, where presidential candidates get an early introduction to the national political press. Huckabee has passed up the bacon for coffee, but he's getting a pretty good grilling anyway. He had been quoted earlier comparing reporters whom he disagreed with in Arkansas to the disgraced Janet Cooke and Jayson Blair. Now, asked about this comparison, Huckabee says it illustrates his greatest fault: "You'll see it—one of the things that gets me in trouble is my love of metaphors. I use hyperbole in the course of trying to paint a word picture. I pay a dear price for it."

Huckabee's occasional tone-deafness—he once joked to Imus he had lost so much weight because the Democrats had imprisoned him in a concentration camp—reveals another side of his personality: Inside this affable thin man,

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there is an angrier fat man trying to get back out. The pointed wit dates back to his childhood. Huckabee was born in 1955 in Hope, Arkansas, into a lower-middle-class family. His father was a fireman and mechanic and his mother a secretary. He was a bright, isolated boy who was not good at sports. With time, he would overcome his shyness, but he never lost a sense of being on the outside looking in. It's the source of his edge—and also his discipline. When he was a boy, he begged his parents for a musical instrument. "When I got the guitar at age eleven, I wanted to play so badly," he says. "I'd play till my fingers bled."

Over time, Huckabee became band leader, popular, a good student, then a top one—his civics teacher remembers him "soak[ing] up everything you've got"—student council president, then governor of Boys State, the American Legion association that in the South serves as a training ground for political leaders. Clinton, it should be noted, only made senator, a lower post in the organization.

4.
Stop Neglecting Your Spiritual Health

Hope took notice of its rising son. A local radio station owner hired Huckabee and let him run his station at age 14. He got as much air time as he wanted (oh, what Clinton would have given for that!). He ironed out his accent, adopting what he calls "general American speech." He seemed headed for the Ivies or the University of Arkansas, which Bill Clinton once called "*the* thing for aspiring politicos to do." But, at 15, Huckabee surprised people again. "Out of the blue, he knows in his heart that the Lord is calling him to preach, and he literally just puts everything else aside," his sister Patricia Harris remembers. "We were all kind of shocked." Huckabee's father didn't even go to church. What had happened was that the '70s had made it to Hope, and Huckabee had not liked the sex and the drugs (he forgave the rock 'n' roll) that hit his town. The countercultural revolution had the paradoxical effect of giving the square Huckabee new confidence. His peers were sheep who had wandered, and God had given him the crook.

His sister remembers that many in Hope were upset by his decision to preach—what a waste for a boy who could have had a constituency to wind up with just a congregation. But Huckabee belonged now to the Lord. He went to Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, graduating in two-and-a-half years in 1976 to save money, then to the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. Twice over the years, adults impressed with his skills offered to pay his law school tuition. "In both cases," Huckabee remembers, "[I said,] 'No, I have a different direction I want to go with my life.'"

The ministry gave Huckabee status—in the South, it puts you in the same room as the doctor and the lawyer. And Huckabee liked preaching. "He was not one of those 'when in doubt, they shout and run about' preachers," his seminary friend Rick Caldwell says. His approach was to persuade with calm, allusive language. Preaching played to Huckabee's identification with the underdog, and it also humanized how he viewed the rich. His sister Pat Harris remembers: "He would tell me, 'Listen, you don't know how good you've got it. You don't know how much hurt there is behind those big houses and riding around in those big cars.'"

5.
Stop Whining

Huckabee might have spent his whole life ministering were it not for Joycelyn Elders. A few years before she proposed teaching masturbation and was forced to resign from her post as U.S. surgeon general, Elders was the equally outspoken director of the Arkansas department of health under Governor Bill Clinton. In 1991, she testified about a proposed parental-notification law before the legislature. Arkansas preachers, she said, have to "stop moralizing from the pulpit."

No sooner were the words out than Governor Clinton began damage control. He called Huckabee, by now the head of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, and asked if he would meet with Elders. Huckabee was known as a moderate who could talk to people, someone who had helped hold off the more extreme wing of the convention during the intense intra-Baptist battles of the early '90s. Clinton hoped Huckabee and Elders could find common ground.

Soon after, Huckabee and Elders met in her office on the top floor of the health department building in Little Rock. "He'd been a preacher, so he knew how to meet and handle people," she remembers. "It was an honest, frank discussion." Though the visit was scheduled for 15 minutes, they wound up talking for over an hour. "I was impressed," Elders recalls. "He really wanted to listen to my opinion."

Huckabee was impressed, too, though in a different way. He and his cohorts had been upset with Clinton's social policies, such as a health-department program to distribute condoms in high schools, but had thus far kept their complaints to themselves. After meeting Elders, he went home and, he remembers, told his wife that "here's a lady who genuinely believes what she's saying and is deep in her convictions. But, if people like her are creating the public policies that will determine how our kids are going to be educated, and the atmosphere, then maybe we need to get out of the stands and get on the field and get our jerseys dirty."

Huckabee was ready to leave the pulpit for the podium. "He felt like someone had to step up and get involved and take the risk," remembers Rick Caldwell.

Huckabee had a simple agenda, the handful of truths he lived by: Abortion is murder; save sex for marriage; and we have a responsibility to help the weak and the poor.

6.
Stop Procrastinating

Huckabee entered the political arena with two key skills—he was a trained communicator and he had a natural constituency in evangelicals. "I am a person who is literally from them," he explains. He was also more experienced in politics than he seemed. "Frankly, the most ruthless kind of politics can be church politics," he joked on "Charlie Rose" in 2005. And religion in Arkansas is not small-time. The church he headed, Beech Street Baptist in Texarkana, had 2,500 members.

His first race, however, was a bust. In 1992, Huckabee, 36, ran against Dale Bumpers, who was 66, for his U.S. Senate seat. He was ruthless, accusing Bumpers of supporting government-funded pornography. Bumpers, a state icon, beat him 60 percent to 40 percent. Huckabee dusted himself off and looked where he would run again. His elevation came almost immediately, via Bill Clinton. After Clinton became president and Lieutenant Governor Jim Guy Tucker filled his seat, Tucker's position came open. Huckabee won the special election for the largely ceremonial job, beating Bumpers's former campaign manager, who also happened to be a former Clinton aide. When Tucker was indicted in 1996, a casualty of Whitewater, Huckabee assumed the governor's job.

Despite his desire to run for office to get his jersey dirty in the culture wars, as governor, Huckabee ended up furthering much that Clinton had done, coming to think of himself as "the paradoxical Republican." He raised teacher pay. He extended health care to uninsured children. He even proposed to make the

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— OSCAR WILDE

TELLING IT LIKE IT IS SINCE 1995

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children of illegal immigrants eligible for state college scholarships (the bill was killed by the legislature). He raised Arkansas's educational ranking from forty-ninth to twenty-ninth and pushed for a dramatic overhaul of Arkansas's poorly maintained roads. His signature issue wasn't abstinence education but music and art education—he mandated 40 minutes of it a week in Arkansas grade schools.

Huckabee's actions could be seen as emanating from his Christian belief in human potential, but they also show that he was paying attention to how his predecessor's predecessor had governed. Just as Clinton saw that, to get out of Little Rock, he would have to move from the left to the center, Huckabee realized that, if he governed as an evangelical governor of a small Southern state, that was where he would stay. He even had a Sister Souljah moment: After Jim Holt, a minister who was in the state Senate, condemned his plan to insure illegal immigrants, Huckabee commented that "I drink a different kind of Jesus juice" than Holt.

Huckabee found a way to be a populist and moderate and Christian conservative all at once. And, because of this intriguing blend, he exceeded voters' expectations. (Even Elders says she was "truly impressed. I feel he really did things that I appreciated.") He was reelected twice on his own in a state where over 80 percent of elected officials are Democrats.

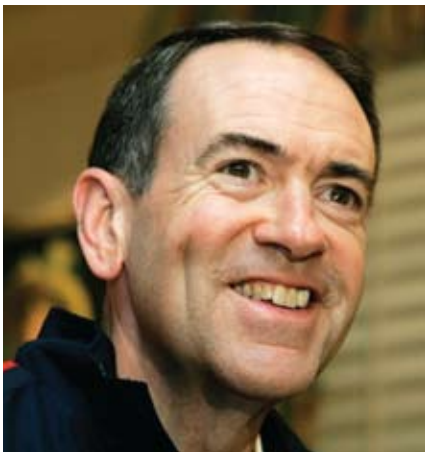
7.
Stop Sitting on the Couch

One day in early 2003, Huckabee had just entered the governor's conference room on the State Capitol's second floor for a meeting with 53 cabinet-level Arkansas officials. He proceeded to the head of the table, where a newly refurbished antique chair waited for him. Huckabee settled his almost 300 pounds onto the leather seat and promptly crashed through it.

In *Quit Digging,* he writes that, looking up from the ground, he had almost felt like crying. He had, over the years, grown progressively fatter, and, despite years of dieting—his sister says he was a "yo-yoer"—he knew he had a problem. This point was furthered during a visit to his doctor, who told him that, if he didn't lose some weight and keep it off, he would be dead in ten years.

Huckabee puts an interesting self-help spin on his addiction narrative—his eating was a cry for help, he says: "One acceptable way for a good Christian kid to delve into a chemical addiction without being thought of as inappropriate or evil is to go to the pizza buffet. Pizza, well, that's OK," he told *The New York Times* in 2005.

Before



After

Huckabee went to an endocrinologist at the University of Arkansas who taught him how to focus on the long run—fitness—rather than just the short one—don't eat that piece of fried chicken. He began an exercise regimen by walking around the governor's grounds in Little Rock. One day, he tried a short run. This morphed into a 5K race. "I've never been so terrified in my life," he says. And, then, the Little Rock Marathon. "I got to tell you something," he told the worried well in Bettendorf. "It ranks up there with the birth of my children, graduating from college, and some of the most incredible milestones of my life."

His weight loss is a story that he retells as a good old-fashioned Baptist narrative of sin and redemption. "I had defeated," he remembers in *Quit Digging*, "the most stubborn and challenging foe of all, I overcame me!"

8.
Stop Fueling with Contaminated Food

The same year he crashed through the chair, Huckabee began writing *Quit Digging*. He says he wrote every word himself. The book reached lots of overweight people, but it turned out to be a handy way to make connections too, a one-man version of the Renaissance Weekend. What middle-aged politician wasn't interested in getting slimmer? From across the aisle came praise from Clinton ("I commend him for working to become fit and strong") and Mark Warner, and from his own side came Mitt Romney ("Sound, straightforward, and easy to follow") and Arnold Schwarzenegger, who hailed Huckabee as "an inspiration and a model."

Huckabee estimates that *Quit Digging* has reached "if not millions, certainly hundreds of thousands." (Though this is, of course, hard to prove; the book has sold 35,000 copies).

In Arkansas, Huckabee tried to institutionalize aspects of his success. He gave state employees walking breaks and offered them pedometers, removed soft-drink machines from schools, sent every child home, and even proposed to adjust food stamps so that they were worth more to buy vegetables than junk food. He gave the grease police a human face.

Dieting gave the national press, not usually interested in Southern Baptist preachers, something to grab onto. It made no difference what his politics were because he had a human story to tell. He received approving coverage in *The Washington Post*, *USA Today*, and *The New York Times Magazine*, where, in response to the question, "How do you feel about being known as the best dieter in politics?" he got to try out one of his self-deprecatory quips before a national audience: "It's one of those few times when a politician actually likes to lose. It also means that I am a much smaller target than I used to be."

9.
Stop Ignoring Signals from Your Body (Politic)

Bill Clinton's rise showed Huckabee that there was a political life beyond the governor's mansion. "I think he sort of broke the four-minute mile," Huckabee says. "A lot of Arkansas people sort of have this complex about 'Poor us, we really can't compete.' Clinton's election certainly, I think, took that away from people. How could they ever say that again?"

Having reached the term limit for Arkansas governors, Huckabee hurried to

AP PHOTO/DANNY JOHNSTON (2)

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set up a presidential exploratory committee late in early 2007, scrambling to catch up with the unusually accelerated pace of the early campaign. Like Clinton, he had built a national base, becoming chair of the National Governors Association. But, unlike Clinton, he couldn't take the support of his ideological base for granted. Over the years, his refusal to toe the party line, especially on the issue of tax increases, made him many enemies.

Grover Norquist, the head of Americans for Tax Reform, gave me his recollections of Huckabee's governorship in a phone call: "The new guy Republican gets to be governor. Haven't had a Republican [in Arkansas] since Rockefeller years ago. We're happy. And he was head of the [Arkansas branch of the] Southern Baptist Convention and a good speaker. Okay, watch that man! ... [Then, as] governor, ... [he] supported an initiative referendum to put on the ballot a tax increase to build roads, a gas tax, and that was defeated eighty percent to twenty percent ... not happy he was doing [that]. No, not happy. ... We think maybe he will learn not to do that sort of thing. But, then, he's back in the cocaine bowl again raising other taxes. Disappointment. I think he won some of those fights. Those were not good. That was bad. ... He's not fighting Grover. He's fighting those people who want lower taxes."

Enemies such as Norquist grew louder as Huckabee's political fortunes rose. But, when I was with Huckabee in Iowa in January, he didn't seem terribly troubled by this. We talked about his years as governor. He had denounced pledges not to raise taxes as "dangerous" only a few days before, on "Meet the Press," and now he was criticizing "blind purists" in the conservative wing of the Republican Party. I asked him whether his impiety would cost him. "To be honest, yes," he said nonchalantly. But political reality was about to mug him. Not long after our chat, Huckabee realized that his "tax-raiser" label was not going to go away and that it might even prove fatal. Despite his rock-solid views on values issues like abortion, his decidedly moderate record was giving conservatives a reason to move on to the next candidate. He had to do something to change perceptions fast.

10.
Stop Making Exceptions

In March 2007, Huckabee gave a different kind of speech at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Northwest D.C. "A fiscal conservative is a person who truly understands that it's not a problem in the federal government that our taxes are too low," he said to the crowd of CPAC activists. "It's a problem that our spending is too high and out of control. And let me further end some speculation. I plan later today to deliver to Grover Norquist a signed pledge that I will be supporting a no-tax pledge as president of the United States, that we will not raise the marginal taxes on income in this country."

11.
Stop Storing Provisions For Failure

In recent months, Huckabee has made sure to visit other stations of the conservative cross. He criticized excessive congressional spending, comparing it to "John Edwards at a beauty shop." He grappled with Michael Moore in July, telling a conference call of reporters that the rotund filmmaker was "why the health care system costs so much in this country." He first endorsed the flat tax and then, after reading a book about it, called for the "FairTax," a straight 30 percent sales tax that most economists consider unacceptably regressive. And, though he hardly needs to, he continues to trumpet the consistency of his antiabortion stance (unlike, say, that of Romney or Giuliani) and his appreciation for Scalia-like justices. He boasted to an antiabortion fundraiser at the Women's Choice Center in Bettendorf, "I'm not sure there's anything we didn't pass that we could as long as *Roe* v. *Wade* is in force." At the first Republican debate in May, he was one of three candidates who raised their hands to announce their rejection of evolution. A month later, at a second debate, he elaborated: "It's pretty simple. A person either believes that God created this process or believes that it was an accident. ... But, you know, if anybody wants to believe that they are descendants of a primate, they are certainly welcome to do it."

12.
Stop Expecting Immediate Success

Here's what Huckabee needs to have happen in the next few months. Evangelicals dissatisfied with the Republican field propel him to visibility. His fundraising ceases to be notional. Then New Hampshire Republicans give him a look and realize that he—or at least the post-CPAC version of him—can be trusted to mind the store. He exceeds expectations in Iowa. The press is agog again. He flourishes in that space where candidates bloom by confounding stereotypes. (Name another candidate who can get away with looking at a picture of the shirtless Vladimir Putin and saying he wished it was Scarlett Johansson.) His candidacy now takes wing, his charisma, his energy, and his weight-loss backstory carrying him to victory over the flip-floppers (Romney), pro-choicers (Giuliani), Christian conservative baiters (McCain), and the Washington-tainted (Thompson and Brownback).

This, of course, is not probable. Evangelicals like Mike, but the majority of Republicans don't get his economic ideas. Is he a populist or a tax cutter? He's got that barbed wit and tendency toward involved metaphors, which may land him in trouble sooner or later. Besides, Republicans are still mostly worried about terrorism and the war in Iraq, on which Huckabee has little credibility—nine pilgrimages to Israel do not a statesman make. "I'm not sure Bill Clinton would have been elected after 9/11," says Mac McLarty, Clinton's former chief of staff and a friend of both Clinton and Huckabee. "This is just a very different time and place." But Huckabee may be the perfect v.p. complement to a candidate who is strong on defense but weak on social issues—evangelicals, after all, make up about 30 percent of the Republican electorate—or who is lacking a good redemption story. (He is, for instance, friendly with Giuliani.)

At the Bettendorf hospital, I saw how Huckabee skillfully transformed concern for his own body into an appeal to the body politic. After he recounted his weight-loss story, Huckabee explained that he was running for president. There was applause from the audience. "And something I'll talk about a lot is not just health care," he added, "but health, and the fact that we need to talk about preventing disease rather than just treating it."

He continued: "Life is a precious gift. ... And I think that's one of the reasons we have this wonderful culture in this country, is that we are a culture of life. Let me give you an example: when the Salem miners in Salem, West Virginia were trapped, and we weren't sure of the fate of the thirteen miners. But, while we were unsure of their status, ... we spared nothing. ... We rescue people, whether they're snow skiers, or hikers stranded in a blizzard, or whether it's miners, or whatever it is. ... That's not just moral, but an issue that defines who we are as a civilization. I didn't mean to go on for so long, but it's important for me to talk about it." ◆

D.T. Max is the author of The Family That Couldn't Sleep: A Medical Mystery.

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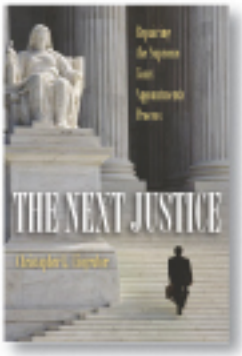

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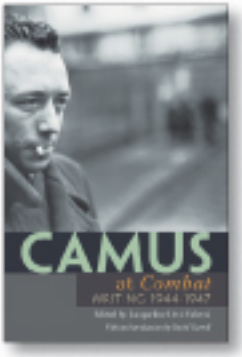

With a foreword by David Carroll

Camus at *Combat*

Writing 1944–1947

Albert Camus

Edited and annotated by Jacqueline Lévi-Valensi
Translated by Arthur Goldhammer

"Albert Camus called the 20th century 'the century of fear', but he may as well have been writing about the 21st. . . . [Camus'] editorials . . . are uncannily resonant today."
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Stanley Kauffmann on Films

EXPLORATIONS

A bit unexpectedly, John Turturro's film *Romance and Cigarettes* sent me back to Wordsworth. In the landmark preface to his *Poems*, Wordsworth explores the differences between Imagination and Fancy. He describes the former as the power to create and realize, but the processes of Fancy, he says, are "as capricious as the accidents of things, and the effects are surprising, playful, ludicrous, amusing, tender or pathetic, as the objects happen to be appositely produced or fortunately combined." Continuing his preview of Turturro, Wordsworth writes, "Fancy depends on the rapidity and profusion with which she scatters her thoughts and images, trusting that their number, and the felicity with which they are linked together, will make amends for the want of individual value." Many have called *Romance and Cigarettes* imaginative; to me it is fanciful.

As a base for his plunge into Fancy, Turturro uses an ultra-common story. A construction worker named Nick lives in Queens with his wife and grown daughters. (Nick's last name is Murder. Never commented on.) His wife, Kitty, discovers his affair with Tula, a saleswoman in a naughty-lingerie shop: wife is enraged. The strife and consequences of the triangle are most of what passes for plot, embellished somewhat irrelevantly by Nick's passion for smoking, which blackens his lungs and darkens the finish.

The film starts virtually in the middle of the marital explosion in the Queens kitchen, scorchingly profane, with Nick—as is often the case with trespassing husbands—feeling aggrieved by his wife's fury. So far, so veristically OK. Then he tells her bitterly that if she doesn't want him, she can go back to her first love, and we get the film's first unconventional touch—in fact, one of the best such touches, light and truly imaginative. The first love, a nice-looking young man, the same age as he was back then, steps into the frame and invites Kitty to return.

ANTHONY RUSSO

ROMANCE AND CIGARETTES
Icon

THE LAST WINTER
IFC First Take

But he quickly disappears, and the brawl continues. Nick, feeling more aggrieved than repentant, strides out of the house, and here comes another truly imaginative lift. Burly Nick, strolling through the Queens streets, bursts into a lovelorn song, and he is quickly accompanied by a chorus of singing and dancing garbagemen. It's refreshing—and for the same reason that the songs were refreshing in Woody Allen's *Everyone Says I Love You*. We feel that Nick's emotions are soaring. The realism is being elevated in the interests of enlarged feeling.

But that is almost the end of Imagination in *Romance and Cigarettes*; from then on, the unconventional touches are sheer Fancy insertions, intrusive displays. To begin with, Turturro shortchanges the story that is supposed to carry the film. Allen told a moderately interesting story, and all his musical fioritura heightened the moments that had some appeal to begin with. Turturro's story is sluggish and stale, and the whirligig flourishes are not enlargements: they are only compensations (hopefully) for the dull story. Character after character bursts into song and dance, intrusively rather than engagingly. (The choreography by Tricia Brouk, plentiful, is good enough, but it doesn't really raise the film to an exhilarating plane.) Some inserts are not musical. After a moment in which Nick feels desolate, we get a flash of him in costume as the blinded Oedipus; Kitty and a young man make love on the imaginary grave of Nick, whose stone calls him an adulterer. In one sequence a calf runs down a street outside a hospital. Apparently Turturro included the shot as further proof of his anti-realistic bravado. The height, or nadir, comes near the end. Nick breaks up with Tula on the shore of a lake. She begs him to let her fellate him before he leaves. Irately, he throws her into the lake, and, gliding gracefully underwater, she sings. Once again, this is not Imagination but Fancy, not meant to expand character or feeling: just another reminder of Turturro's cleverness.

Tula's sex offer is one of her mildest remarks in the course of the piece: to call her foul-mouthed is not to do her justice. She is played by Kate Winslet, one of the best screen actresses of her age, who gyrates and slinks along like any schoolboy's dream and, possibly to amuse herself at least as much as us, gives Tula a provincial British accent. All in all, Winslet's performance shows that a professional, if she accepts a role, keeps her word and fulfills it.

James Gandolfini—here Mr. Murder, not Mr. Soprano—shows more flexibility than usual. On television and elsewhere, I have often thought that he was little more than 190 pounds of Italian-American ethnicity, with appropriate sound effects. Here there are hints of a man. Kitty, his wife, is done by Susan Sarandon, always valid, always appealing, always funny and sad. The only gross casting error was using Elaine Stritch to play

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Nick's mother. No film mother and son can ever have had less relation in speech, tone, and looks. Besides, the mother has been dragged in only to deliver a pointless sexual aria. Christopher Walken, always magnetic, is also dragged in as Kitty's cousin to do some snappy songs and dances that are, again, irrelevant.

Romance and Cigarettes has benefited from the frustrations of the film-making community. Whenever a picture comes along that deliberately violates film-making conventions, it is bound to be praised by those in and around the business who envy the director's nerve. (This sort of film is, of course, very different from the usual film musical, which is highly conventional.) Distinctions are lax between works of Imagination, like Allen's or like Medak's *The Ruling Class*, and works like *Romance and Cigarettes*, which are simply escape hatches for Fancy's feeble flights.

The world's energy problems have been winding through films, one way or another, at least since *The China Syndrome* in 1979. *The Last Winter* is fundamentally on this subject, but its focus is unusual. The film is set in a station along an Alaskan pipeline, a station of some size and comfort where a group of men and a few women keep watch. The subject of energy in this case becomes a matter not primarily of economics and politics but of personal conditions—a relatively few people clumped together in the middle of immense emptiness.

An oil rig in mid-ocean is the immediate comparison, but the oil-rig crew has the limitation and (as it turns out) the blessing of never leaving their station. These people in Alaska have phones and computers and video, but they are surrounded by space that they must continually explore—three hundred and sixty degrees of snow that only at first seems static, arctically pastoral.

The screenplay is by Robert Leaver and the experienced director Larry Fessenden. This was my first encounter with Fessenden's work, despite his reputation for high-level scare films, and very quickly indeed it is clear that he is not any kind of exploitation maven. He is gifted, knowledgeable, keen—possibly a bit canted in his choice of materials but an authentic, serious film-maker. More: he establishes these points less by the vistas of immensity, although they are stunning, than by the way he handles the corridors and rooms and doorways within. The oil station begins early to remind us of the spaceship in *2001*. The station is (yes) stationary, and the space outside is not super-cosmic, merely incredible, but again the people within are bound together by more than physical proximity.

The story, which has mostly to do with the authority of the chief and with one of the women, is adequate but is only the means of dealing with the themes. What really happens here is that, while the story is going on, the real conflict is between the space outside and the diminutive human beings within it. Eventually this conflict has a dire effect on one of the crew, and consequences follow. Mentions recur throughout of world matters like global warming, but the film is really about a set of specific human circumstances that follow from those huge matters.

Well, up to a point. Now comes some shaded news. Around two-thirds of the way through the film, a severe accident occurs at the station, and *The Last Winter* suddenly shifts from the subjects above to a much more usual drama of physical survival in dangerous conditions. The radios and phones go out, people get hurt, the chief and one of the crew set out on snowmobiles for the nearest station, twenty-five miles away. The film's whole tone shifts—from subtle mystery to blunt drama. The new tone is scarily handled, but it is a lesser film. Apparently the writers felt that the natural conclusion of the larger drama they had begun would take too long and would not be vivid enough. So they threw in the accident—tingly but a chromatic transposition.

Fessenden, who is his own editor, has splashed in from time to time some glimpses of a character's thoughts or fears or past or future, all of which help to maintain the atmosphere of overview that carries most of the picture. The cast is certainly adequate, especially the chief, played by Ron Perlman. Decades ago I used to see Perlman in avant-garde drama Off-Broadway. Time and adventure have now brought him to gruff authority in the midst of the Alaskan wild.

And that brings up the last fascinating point. It is not Alaska. The picture was shot in Iceland. The cinematographer, G. Magni Ágústsson, is Icelandic. If the fact that this is his native country helped him with his exterior lighting, it is certainly a boon. But his interiors are at least as good, subtly lit, precise. Once again Ágústsson proves that first-class cinematography is now international. ◆

Jeffrey Goldberg
THE USUAL SUSPECT

THE ISRAEL LOBBY AND U.S. FOREIGN POLICY
By John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt
(Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 484 pp., $26)

In October 2002, Osama bin Laden issued a statement in which he analyzed America's inexhaustible number of sins and prescribed ways of repenting for many of them. The statement was, by the standards of bin Laden's cave encyclicals, unusually coherent. (Unlike, say, his most recent video, released in early September, which ranged across the sub-prime mortgage crisis, America's high rate of taxation, and the work of Noam Chomsky—the latter treated sympathetically, of course.) The 2002 letter laid out in a somewhat deliberate fashion bin Laden's main complaints, and it helped to answer a question that Americans often ask: Do they hate us for who we are, or for what we do?

Bin Laden's answer was, why choose? In his epistle to America, bin Laden asked Americans to submit to Islam, which he called "the religion of showing kindness to others." He excoriated us for our immorality: "We call you to be a people of manners, principles, honor and purity; to reject the immoral acts of fornication, homosexuality, intoxicants [and] gambling." He condemned us for manufacturing AIDS, which is a "Satanic American Invention." He also declared himself in opposition to the pervasive practice of incest in America, "in the face of which neither your sense of honor nor your laws object." He plangently concluded that "it is saddening to tell you that you are the worst civilization witnessed by the history of mankind." We are the worst because we "invent" our own laws to govern ourselves, rather than embrace God's law, or more precisely, *his* God's law, *sharia*; and because we mandate the separation of religion from politics; and because we allow usury.

Jeffrey Goldberg is a national correspondent for The Atlantic and the author of Prisoners: A Muslim and a Jew Across the Middle East Divide (Knopf).

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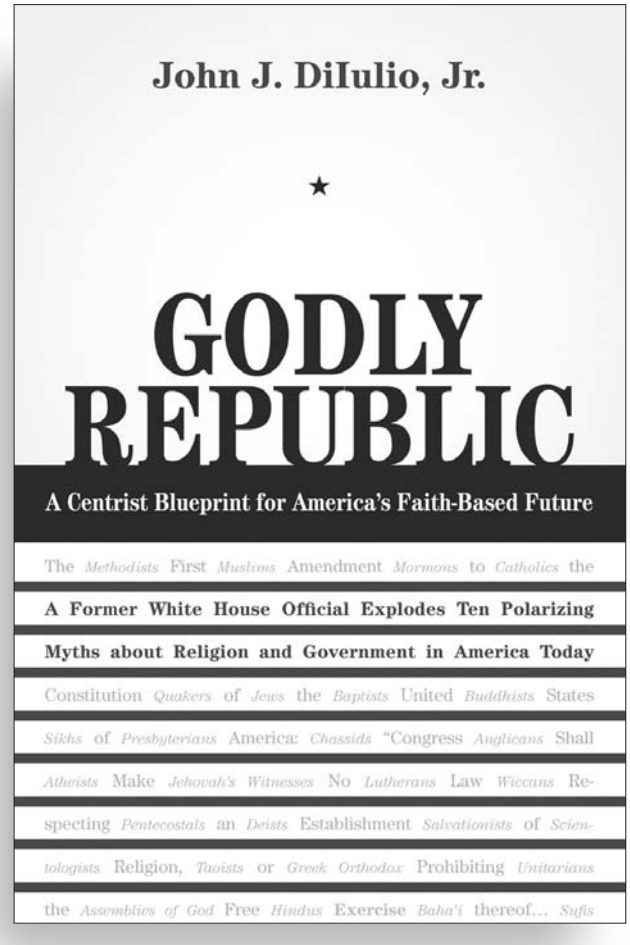
John J. DiIulio, Jr.
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A Centrist Blueprint for America's Faith-Based Future
The Methodists First Muslims Amendment Mormons to Catholics the
A Former White House Official Explodes Ten Polarizing
Myths about Religion and Government in America Today
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The American addiction to usury is most upsetting to bin Laden. As is well known, the charging of interest—at usurious rates or otherwise—is banned by Islam. The institutions of "Islamic banking" were developed to find a way to conform to Islamic law and still prosper. Bin Laden's view of usury, and of Western banking practices, is characteristically unsophisticated. And he has a theory about its historical origins: Western banking is Jewish banking. "As a result of [usury], in all their different forms and guises, the Jews have taken control of your economy, through which they have then taken control of your media, and now control all aspects of your life, making you their servants and achieving their aims at your expense."

The Jews, of course, are a preoccupation of bin Laden's. They are an important source of immorality, and, in their union with Christianity—the "Zionist-Crusader alliance" of which he often speaks— they have for centuries propagated falsehood and heresy. In conjunction with the Christians, the Jews also advocate policies that undermine the interests of Islam. It is not merely American financial and political support for Israel that frustrates bin Laden, but, crucially, America's role in perpetuating the idea that Palestine was once a Jewish homeland, and that the Jews of today are, in fact, proper Jews at all: "It brings us both laughter and tears to see that you have not yet tired of repeating your fabricated lies that the Jews have a historical right to Palestine, as it was promised to them in the Torah."

In the 2002 letter, bin Laden blames America for providing support to the usurping Zionists, but a careful reading of his rant will show that American support for Israel is only one of his many grievances against America. "You attacked us in Somalia; you supported the Russian atrocities against us in Chechnya, the Indian oppression against us in Kashmir," he writes. "You steal our wealth and oil at paltry prices.... This theft is indeed the biggest theft ever witnessed by mankind in the history of the world.... Your forces occupy our countries; you spread your military bases throughout them; you corrupt our lands." And in the Al Qaeda heartlands of Pakistan and Afghanistan, it is often Hindus—and, in some places, Shia—who are the unfortunate focus of Islamist zeal. ("The polytheists"—the Hindus—"are Satan's agents in the world," the Al Qaeda terrorist Fazlur Rahman Khalil once told me.) The Al Qaeda worldview is a fevered jumble, in which hatred never lacks an object and infidels are infinite.

It is rather uncontroversial to call Osama bin Laden an anti-Semite. He is the easy case. But since many people in the West are queasy about attaching the label of anti-Semitism to almost anybody, regarding the charge of anti-Semitism as itself proof of prejudice, let me begin by describing bin Laden's view of history less inflammatorily—not as anti-Semitic, but as Judeocentric. He believes that Jews exercise disproportionate control over world affairs, and that world affairs may therefore be explained by reference to the Jews. A Judeocentric view of history is one that regards the Jews as the center of the story, and therefore the key to it. Judeocentrism is a single-cause theory of history, and as such it is, almost by definition, a conspiracy theory. Moreover, Judeocentrism comes in positive forms and negative forms. The positive form of Judeocentrism is philo-Semitism, the negative form is anti-Semitism. (There are philo-Semites who regard the Jews as the inventors of modernity, and there are anti-Semites who do the same; but the idea that Spinoza, Freud, and Einstein are responsible for us is as foolish as the idea that their ideas are *jüdische Wissenschaft*.) In both its positive and negative forms, Judeocentrism is always a mistake. Human events are not so neatly explained.

In the inflamed universe of negative Judeocentrism, there is a sliding scale of obsession. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the president of Iran, seems at times to view the world entirely through the prism of a Jewish conspiracy, and he regularly breaks new ground in the field of state-supported Holocaust denial. In Cairo, the activities of Jews, Israeli and otherwise, are a continual source of worry. Many of the monarchs in the Gulf countries, by contrast, will sometimes exploit anti-Jewish feeling for political reasons, but they do not seem to be personally obsessed by Jews. They are too worldly for that. In Europe, too, one finds great variations in the expression of Judeocentrism. There are still traces of Holocaust-induced philo-Semitism in places like Germany; but there are also figures such as Clare Short, the former British cabinet minister, who recently blamed Israel for global warming.

America, too, has a history of Judeocentrism, and also of the negative kind, the essence of which has been the belief that Jews, in order to advance their own interests, are responsible for entangling America in unnecessary wars—what we now call "wars of choice," which the Jews, it is alleged, have chosen for us. In the years leading up to World War II, the Jewish desire for war against Hitler was a constant theme of Father Coughlin, Charles Lindbergh, and Joseph P. Kennedy. "Instead of agitating for war, Jews in this country should be opposing it in every way, for they will be the first to feel its consequences," Lindbergh said in a speech in Des Moines on September 11, 1941. In more recent times, figures such as Patrick Buchanan, Louis Farrakhan, and David Duke have updated the notion and explained America's woes—Buchanan cleverly, Duke crudely, Farrakhan insanely—as the work of the Jews. (In 1990, as the first Bush administration was building up to war against Iraq, in order to expel Saddam Hussein's forces from Kuwait, Buchanan stated that "Capitol Hill is Israeli-occupied territory.") Perhaps the best and most succinct expression of this school of American Judeocentrism was offered by Mel Gibson when he explained, upon his arrest for drunk driving, that "the Jews are responsible for all the wars in the world."

It is an odious tradition, and I do not see how any thoughtful or decent individual would wish to belong to it. (I say thoughtful because the theory has no analytical value, and decent because the theory has harmful consequences.) But the tradition has now found a couple of unexpected new tribunes. The Judeocentric understanding of America's foreign policy is now the special province of two ostensibly reputable scholars, John J. Mearsheimer of the University of Chicago and Stephen M. Walt of Harvard University. The two men gained their fame—which is wildly disproportionate to their achievement—last spring, after the publication of an article in the *London Review of Books* that condemned the activities of Jewish-American supporters of Israel and argued that those activities are responsible for an astounding number of world-historical developments.

In the article, the word "lobby" was ominously capitalized, Robert Ludlum–style, as "the Lobby," to connote the perfect grip of pro-Israel activists upon Washington. In their new book, which builds on (and worsens) that earlier work, Mearsheimer and Walt lowercase the word "lobby," as a small tribute, I suppose, to the reality-based community. They have also excised some of the rougher language of their original blast. They have corrected some, though not all, of their errors of fact. But otherwise the book remains true to the malignant and dishonest spirit of the article. It represents the most sustained attack, the most mainstream attack, against the political

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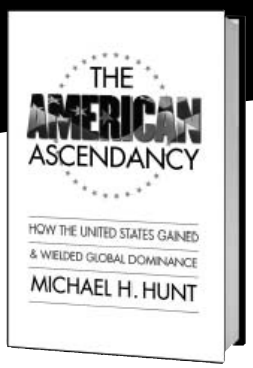

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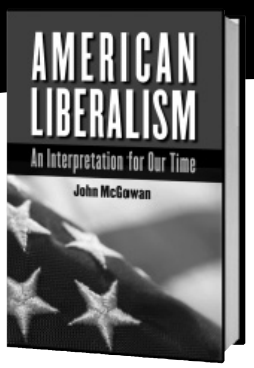

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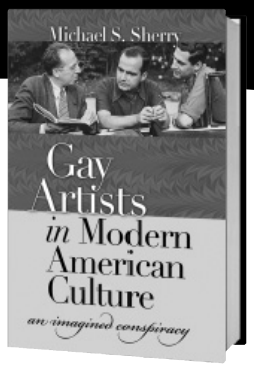

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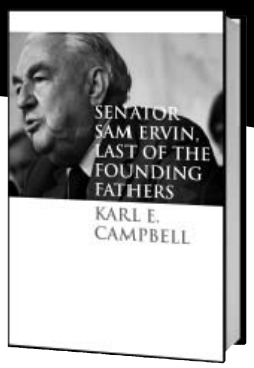

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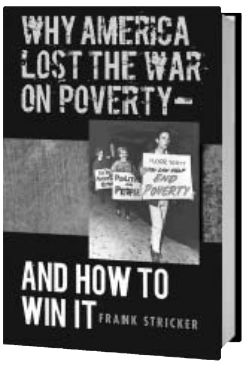

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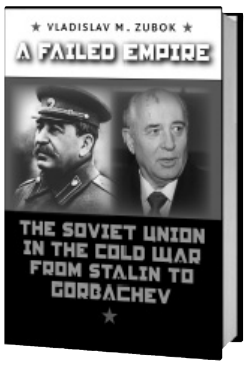

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enfranchisement of American Jews since the era of Father Coughlin.

The villains in *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* are almost entirely Jewish. Many of the chapters of the book contain extensive lists of Jews (even Rothschilds) who, the authors claim, act against the best interests of the United States. And act effectively: the Israel lobby in this book is an invincible juggernaut. In some of Mearsheimer and Walt's pages, AIPAC resembles SMERSH or THRUSH. The America-Israel Public Affairs Committee, you see, "has an almost unchallenged hold on Congress," and therefore on the United States. (In the *London Review* article, the "hold" was described as a "stranglehold.")

And how do we know that AIPAC has a hold on Congress? This is a very good question. For Mearsheimer and Walt are so thoroughly under the spell of their own assertions that they do not seem to notice the circular (or more precisely, agitprop) quality of what they have written. Consider a typical sentence: "The real reason why American politicians are so deferential [to Israel] is the political power of the Israel lobby." That is not a proof. That is what requires a proof.

So what are Mearsheimer and Walt's methods? A hasty survey of a vast literature on Israel and the Middle East, clearly unfamiliar to them until very recently, so as to cite every and any remark that suits their purpose, its context or its veracity notwithstanding. Most significantly, and by their own admission, Mearsheimer and Walt did no reporting. They did not interview a single member of Congress for their book about Congress. Perhaps it is beneath them as scholars to behave like journalists. But their methodological arrogance, their failure to meet any serious standard of empirical inquiry, their slavish reliance on second- and third-hand works, is astonishing. The truth of what they say is just completely obvious to them. At an appearance in September at the bookstore Politics and Prose, in Washington, Walt confidently asserted that "I think if we had interviewed every member of Congress and every lobbyist at AIPAC we would not have found a substantially different story than the one we reported." How does he know?

After baldly declaring, in the manner of conspiracy theorists, and over and over again, also in the manner of conspiracy theorists, that AIPAC dominates Congress (at the same time claiming, risibly, that "we do not believe the lobby . . . controls important institutions in the United States"), Mearsheimer and Walt then proceed to catalog all the mistakes and the crimes for which AIPAC and the many other groups that make up the pro-Israel lobby are, in their omnipotence, responsible. Mearsheimer and Walt are not alleging the existence of a secret Jewish plot to control American foreign policy; they are alleging the existence of an open Jewish plot to control American foreign policy. The most remarkable of their allegations—this one is actually quite breathtaking—is that the pro-Israel lobby is causally related to the attacks of September 11. They claim that AIPAC's control of Congress forced America into an unnaturally close alliance with Israel, and that this alliance infuriated bin Laden, as well as Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the mastermind of the operation, who acted against America in large part because of its support for Israel.

This is not quite the view, commonly heard in the Arab world, that Israel had a direct hand in the destruction of the World Trade Center; but still it is heinous. The unmistakable message of *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* is that the destruction on September 11 was caused in significant measure by the Jews. "The United States has a terrorism problem in good part because it has long been so supportive of Israel," Mearsheimer and Walt write. "Many people may not realize how much America's one-sided policies have cost it over the years. Not only have these policies helped inspire al-Qaeda, but they have also facilitated its recruitment efforts and contributed to growing anti-Americanism throughout the region." At Politics and Prose, Walt called America's support for Israel "one of the key causes" of "America's terrorist problem." He went on to say that "American policy gives some individuals in the Arab and Islamic world cause to attack the United States as happened on 9/11." Cause! Ponder that word.

Never mind that Mearsheimer and Walt exaggerate the centrality of the Jews in bin Laden's worldview. (The transcript of his September video makes this clear.) Al Qaeda's war on America is only one of three wars that Mearsheimer and Walt blame on Israel and its mainly Jewish supporters. They argue that pro-Israel Jews in America were "the principal driving force behind the Bush administration's decision to invade Iraq in 2003"; and they argue that it is only Jewish organizations, and their patrons in the Jewish state, that are now fomenting a war against Iran.

To support their preference for an American-Iranian détente, Mearsheimer and Walt present a spectacularly partial rendering of the pertinent history—they do not even consider that one barrier to better relations with the theocratic dictators in Tehran might be our inconvenient but painful memories of the hostage crisis. And in making their case that it is only Jews who oppose reconciliation with Iran, they neglect to mention, among other things, European opposition to the Iranian nuclear program. Their Judeocentric interpretation of the Iran hawks does not consider the possibility that Nicolas Sarkozy, the president of France, might have been motivated only by French national security interests when he recently said that Iran's obstinacy on the nuclear question would have "catastrophic consequences." Or has AIPAC gotten to him, too? But wait—Sarkozy is one-quarter Jewish. No wonder he is militant about Iran! (Mearsheimer and Walt like to explain the pro-Israel attitudes of American politicians in gross tribal terms. Howard Dean's "unabashed" pro-Israel stance, for example, is explicable when you grasp that "Dean's wife is Jewish and his children were raised Jewish as well.")

Mearsheimer and Walt stretch their Iran argument to the snapping point. They contend that Israeli politicians and their supporters in America exaggerate the existential threat to Israel posed by Iran, because Iranian radicals have not actually called for the elimination of Israel. They assert that "Ahmadinejad's call for Israel to 'vanish from the page of time' (or to be 'erased from the pages of history') is often mistranslated as a call for Israel's physical destruction (i.e. to 'wipe Israel off the map')." Often mistranslated? I wonder how good their own Farsi is. But Al Jazeera—no known Jewish control there—reported in 2005 that at the "World Without Zionism" conference in Tehran, Ahmadinejad declared that "Israel must be wiped off the map." Ahmadinejad's own website described the speech this way: "He further expressed his firm belief that the new wave of confrontations generated in Palestine and the growing turmoil in the Islamic world would in no time wipe Israel away." The official Iranian broadcast service reported that "Iran's President . . . on Wednesday called for Israel to be 'wiped off the map.'" Surely there are clearer ways to express a desire for coexistence.

ANTHONY RUSSO

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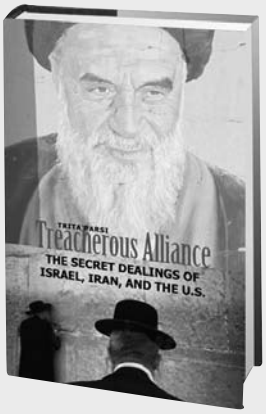
TREACHEROUS ALLIANCE

The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States

Trita Parsi



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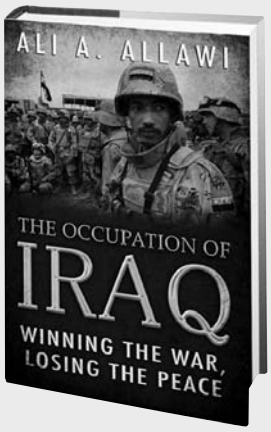

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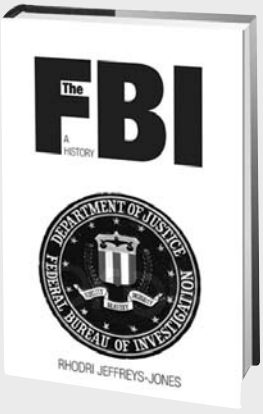

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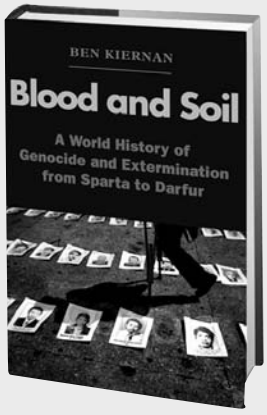

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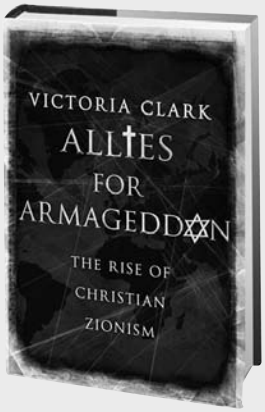
ALLIES FOR ARMAGEDDON

The Rise of Christian Zionism

Victoria Clark



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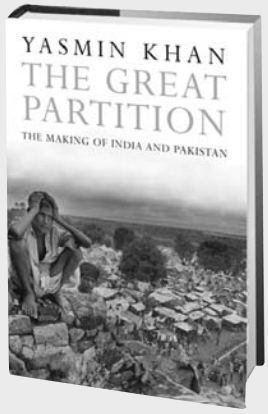
The Making of India and Pakistan

Yasmin Khan



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It is mystifying that Mearsheimer and Walt would so easily destroy their own credibility by stating as fact lies that are so easily refuted. Perhaps it is because they have become dedicated enemies of complexity. When did it become legitimate in American political science to explain complicated phenomena by single causes? Not even the blizzard of footnotes at the end of their book can disguise the fact that it is an exercise in simplification. Or is their intellectual imbalance owed to a different pressure—to the rage of the realist, perhaps? Mearsheimer and Walt are prominent advocates of the "realist" approach to foreign policy; and there is nothing a realist despises more, from Henry Kissinger to Samuel Huntington (to whom this book is dedicated), than domestic interference in the crafting of foreign policy. What right does an ignorant and emotional ethnic group have to disrupt the plans of wise statesmen and the analyses of detached academics? But such disruptions are an integral part of the American system—as America's Cubans and Turks and Greeks and, yes, Jews have regularly, and quite legitimately, demonstrated. Mearsheimer and Walt's Judeocentric view of American policy in the Middle East is just a way of pinning the American system that they dislike on the Jews.

The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy is a book of continuous astonishments. Each chapter contains assertions of Jewish misbehavior, or criminality. The history of the Arab-Israeli conflict recounted here is comically one-sided, even by the standards of Israel's revisionist historians. In Mearsheimer and Walt's telling, Israel is perpetually the aggressor; it has never made a serious move toward peace and compromise; and its existence has never been threatened by the Arabs, who are portrayed as out-numbered, out-funded, and under-armed victims of Zionist aggression. The Israel of Mearsheimer and Walt is simply unrecognizable to anyone who is halfway fair and halfway learned about the Middle East. Various scholars have already demolished their recounting of Israeli history, most notably Benny Morris in the pages of this magazine. Morris's research into the origins of the war for Israeli independence in 1948 was put to perverse use by Mearsheimer and Walt, and he reclaimed it with authority. I will not dwell here on their many mistakes and distortions, except to point out two of the most obvious ones: their claim that Israel's Arab neighbors did not hope to destroy the Jewish state in 1967, and their claim that Israel, under the leadership of Ehud Barak, did not offer Yasir Arafat anything fair or interesting at Camp David and Taba in 2000. Both are easily refuted. (An obscure little volume called *My Life*, by Bill Clinton, makes a quick hash of their account of the peace process.)

Like Jimmy Carter, Mearsheimer and Walt condemn Israel for behaving in an un-Christian manner. "Christian Zionists may believe that biblical prophecy justifies Jewish control of all of Palestine, but other Christian principles—such as Christ's command to 'love thy neighbor as thyself'—are sharply at odds with Israel's treatment of its Palestinian subjects," they piously write. But the Palestinians, of course, love their neighbors. Not willing to undermine their portrait of the Palestinians as lambs before the Jewish wolf, Mearsheimer and Walt only fleetingly acknowledge the existence of Palestinian terrorism (without ever once mentioning the number of Israeli victims of Palestinian terror—or American victims, for that matter), except to observe that Palestinian terrorism was forced on the Palestinians by Israel's unrelenting suppression after the 1967 war. "Not surprisingly, Palestinian resistance has frequently employed terrorism, which is usually how subject populations strike back at powerful occupiers." Such an analysis assumes that the reader is unaware that Palestinian terrorism against Israel predates the 1967 war and the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. It is also an insult to other subject populations: the Kurdish leader Massoud Barzani, in an interview five years ago, was explicit about his rejection of terrorism, saying that "we could have bombed movie theaters in Baghdad and buses like the Palestinians, but we made the decision not to. It would have been wrong." Like so many supporters of the Palestinians, Mearsheimer and Walt have no use for their historical agency. The Palestinians are always responsible for nothing.

In building their case against Israel and its supporters in America, Mearsheimer and Walt prophylactically denounce anti-Semitism. But at the same time they argue that it barely exists, or that its existence has no bearing whatever upon this bitter discussion: "While the charge of anti-Semitism can be an effective smear tactic, it is usually groundless." Usually when, and usually where? No, not all criticism of Israel or AIPAC is anti-Semitic. Wait, let me say that again. No, not all criticism of Israel or AIPAC is anti-Semitic. But the idea that no criticism of Israel or AIPAC is anti-Semitic is just as ridiculous. To proceed with their generalized and somewhat defensive point, Mearsheimer and Walt ignore an abundance of evidence about Europe, including the well-publicized British parliamentary report on anti-Semitism, issued in September 2006, which found anti-Jewish incitement in Britain to have reached crisis levels. The leader of that parliamentary inquiry, Denis MacShane, wrote in *The Washington Post* last month that "Europe is reawakening its old demons, but today there is a difference. The old anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism have morphed into something more dangerous."

Not so, say Mearsheimer and Walt. The number of anti-Semites in Europe, they write, is "small and their extreme views are rejected by the vast majority of Europeans." They do not deny, though, that "there is anti-Semitism among European Muslims, some of it provoked by Israel's behavior toward the Palestinians and some of it straightforwardly racist." This is a bizarre and foul passage, its foulness easily clarified by a simple act of substitution. Imagine Farrar, Straus and Giroux publishing the following sentence: "We would not deny that there is some racial prejudice among whites, some of it provoked by the misbehavior of African-Americans, and some of it straightforwardly racist." Mearsheimer and Walt are the sort of scholars who think that if you wish to understand racism, study blacks, and if you wish to understand anti-Semitism, study Jews. They are chillingly unaware that such views are complicit with the prejudice that they claim to abhor.

The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy is premised on many such nasty and false ideas, but underpinning them all is the belief that America supports Israel only because the pro-Israel lobby forces it to do so. Mearsheimer and Walt contend—we have heard this contention many times before—that Israel has no strategic or moral value to America, and that a proper foreign policy would cut Israel adrift. What is unfathomable to them is that many Americans, Jewish and otherwise, admire Israel. Forty years of polling has consistently shown that Americans support Israel in its conflict with the Arabs. Why? There are a multitude of plausible reasons. Both Israel and America were founded by refugees from European religious intolerance; both are rooted in a common religious tradition; Israel is a lively democracy in a part of the world that lacks democracy;

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Israelis seem self-reliant in the manner of American pioneers; and Israel's enemies, in many cases, seem to be America's enemies as well. And perhaps some obstreperous Americans side with Israel simply because the radical Islamists demand that they stop.

None of these possible explanations has penetrated the minds of Mearsheimer and Walt. There is only one cause for America's support for Israel, they say: the lobby, its money, its muscle, its effectiveness at suppressing dissent about its activities and about the depth of Israel's crimes and strategic uselessness. (More about dissent in a moment.) The ultimate lesson of this book is that America must free itself from the shackles of the pro-Israel lobby. It is this message, more than any other, that makes Mearsheimer and Walt the heirs of a certain American current. In 1940, Joseph P. Kennedy went to Hollywood to address its mostly Jewish studio chiefs. As recounted in Neal Gabler's *An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood*, Kennedy told his lunch audience to "stop making anti-Nazi pictures or using the film medium to promote or show sympathy to the cause of the 'democracies' versus the 'dictators.'" He told the executives that the Jews were already being blamed for the war. His bullying was effective: the studio chiefs, uneasy about their ethnic heritage and therefore susceptible to the call of assimilation, were frightened into compliance by his message, until America entered the war a year later. Mearsheimer and Walt have set themselves a similar goal: to convince non-Jews that their Jewish fellow citizens do not have their best interests at heart, and, further, to harass or to rattle or to embarrass American Jews into silence. Their book is not an act of scholarship, but an act of intimidation.

But wait. Isn't AIPAC the one that is in the business of intimidation? "The lobby has gone to considerable lengths to shape public discourse about Israel by putting pressure on the media and academia and by establishing a tangible presence in influential foreign policy think tanks," Mearsheimer and Walt insist. "Efforts to shape public perceptions often include charging critics of Israel with anti-Semitism." The publication of their article in the *London Review of Books* certainly provoked controversy. It was designed to provoke controversy. But our heroes' skin proved too thin for controversy. Though they were extensively praised in Europe, where everybody is of course much saner because they are beyond AIPAC's reach, Mearsheimer and Walt experienced a good deal of withering criticism in America. (And also some fair, even generous coverage here, including a credulous *Washington Post Magazine* cover story about their work.) And yet their ideas have been widely debated and discussed. And yet they received a dizzying advance to turn their essay into this book. And yet their book is already a best-seller.

They claim that they themselves are victims of the pro-Israel lobby, but the existence of their book, and the sensation that attends it, rather negates their self-pity. I mean, somehow *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* slipped past the lobby. When I visited Amazon.com to check the book's ranking a few weeks ago—it was at number thirty-five—I learned that customers who bought it also purchased *The Power of Israel in the United States*; *Beyond Chutzpah: On the Misuse of Anti-Semitism and the Abuse of History*; *They Dare Speak Out: People and Institutions Confront Israel's Lobby*; and of course Jimmy Carter's *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*. So there is a literature of this sort, and a market for it. And yet in their own minds—this is the comic dimension of this sad story—Mearsheimer and Walt are dissidents. They portray themselves, and the many American critics of the pro-Israel lobby, as free-speech martyrs. In this way the

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fellows at number thirty-five resemble their idol Jimmy Carter, who complained about being muzzled even as his book was climbing the best-seller lists. They seem to think that anybody who disagrees with what they say is denying their right to say it. The truth is that most of Mearsheimer and Walt's critics do not want to suppress their ideas. They merely want to refute them.

The pro-Israel lobby, Mearsheimer and Walt contend, goes to any length to steer media coverage in Israel's favor: "If the media were left to their own devices, they would not serve up as consistent a diet of pro-Israel coverage and commentary." And whose devices, precisely, are they left up to? We are awfully close to the Elders of Z. here. Mearsheimer and Walt's opinion that the press in America is robotically pro-Israel only betrays their ignorance of the American press. They are apparently unacquainted with the work of the editorial boards of, say, *The New York Times* and *The Boston Globe*. They might recall the life and work of the late Peter Jennings. They identify such columnists as Richard Cohen of *The Washington Post* and Thomas L. Friedman of *The New York Times* as Israeli sympathizers, which is true in the sense that Cohen and Friedman do not support the murder of Israeli civilians or the extinction of the Israeli state. But when Friedman's words suit their own tendency, when he writes critically of Israeli policy, they cite him. So Friedman is an agent of Israeli interests, except when he is not. At his Politics and Prose talk, Walt said that American columnists represent a narrow spectrum of opinion on Israel. "If you look at punditry in the U.S., there's no equivalent of a Robert Fisk or a Patrick Seale," he said. This is true, but I cannot lament the loss. Patrick Seale is the court biographer of the Assad family, and the author of a book that identifies Abu Nidal, a mass murderer of Jews, as an Israeli agent; and Robert Fisk is a rabid anti-Zionist who has lately made common cause with the September 11 conspiracy movement.

Mearsheimer and Walt argue that the pro-Israel groups have gone to dangerous and unprecedented lengths to shut down "honest" debate—one that would presumably credit the ideas of such fearless truth-tellers as Fisk and Seale—about Israel. They provide numerous examples. "Jewish Voice for Peace was denied a booth at a major Jewish community event in the San Francisco area on the grounds that it was insufficiently supportive of Israel, and the Hillel chapter at the University of Texas refused to give an organization called Jewish Students for Palestinian Rights space to conduct a study group." And "pro-Israel groups were more active shaping media coverage than pro-Arab groups were; in 1970, for example, the Conference of Presidents distributed press kits (complete with photos and feature stories) to more than seventeen hundred newspapers and to major wire services." And "to discourage unfavorable reporting on Israel, groups in the lobby organize letter-writing campaigns, demonstrations, and boycotts against news outlets whose content they consider anti-Israel." And "following the publication of our original article . . . the president of the War College received phone calls from several members of Congress who questioned whether it was appropriate to have us speak at the conference. To his credit, the president took no action in response to these calls and we appeared without incident." And "a subsequent invitation to Walt to speak in a lecture series at the University of Montana also provoked heated denunciations by several faculty members, who began a protracted but unsuccessful campaign to have the faculty coordinator of the lecture series removed from his post." Booths, press kits, letters, phone calls. Get it? The chilling pattern is clear. First they come for the faculty coordinator of the lecture series at the University of Montana, then they come for you.

There is an interesting book to be written about the power of AIPAC, and other pro-Israel lobbying groups, in Washington. There is also a book to be written about the moral failings of Israel's occupation of Palestinian lands. I myself wrote a version of that latter book. But my recoil from Israel's settlement policy was not a recoil from Israel itself: I remain a believer in the legitimacy and the necessity of a national home for the Jewish people. I regard territorial compromise, and the establishment of the state of Palestine alongside the state of Israel, as the only solution to this savage conflict. And I am not much of a believer in AIPAC.

I have three reasons for my distaste for AIPAC. The first is a matter of style: AIPAC's leaders tend toward glibness and certitude, when the Middle East is a dense and ambiguous place. The second is that I dislike single-issue lobbies and single-issue politics—the duties of American citizenship require more than that; and I worry about the distorting impact of money in political campaigns. The third is that AIPAC has leaned rightward in recent years, and today seeks to drum up support for policies that do not seem to me to be in Israel's best interests. On the issue of aid to Israel, AIPAC reflexively seeks from Congress generous grants that also do not seem to me to be in Israel's best interests. It is true that economic aid is being phased out, but military assistance is being increased—Israel receives about $3 billion a year in direct aid, although it has become a well-off country (even if the numbers of its poor are scandalously high). As an American taxpayer, I would rather see some of that money go to poorer countries. And I tend to think that Israel would be better off—more independent, more responsible with its own money—if it paid for American weaponry out of its own treasury, rather than with American aid money. I believe Israel should slowly wean itself from American aid, but AIPAC first has to agree to this.

Now, none of these criticisms requires any courage on my part. Indeed, these opinions are all widely held and widely debated within the exceedingly unmonolithic Jewish community, and they betray no particular animus toward the Jewish state. (Mearsheimer and Walt have no grasp whatsoever of the diversity of American Jewish life. In a single sentence, they identify the Zionist Organization of America, which is run by the revanchist Morton Klein, and the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, which is run by the progressive David Saperstein, as interchangeable cogs of the pro-Israeli machine.) Mearsheimer and Walt are for the two-state solution, which is banal but fine. Yet when did support for the two-state solution require support for a Jewish conspiracy theory? Why couldn't these formerly credible scholars have made their criticisms of AIPAC and of Israel without demonizing Jews and demonizing Israel? And do they know anything, *anything at all*, about lobbies in the nation's capital?

Of course AIPAC acts forcefully, even arrogantly: for lobbyists, that is one definition of professional success. Several years ago, at dinner with Steven Rosen, who was the foreign policy chief of AIPAC until he came under suspicion of passing American secrets to Israel (he has not yet been brought to trial), I mentioned the controversy involving a former president of AIPAC who was caught on tape bragging that he had "cut a deal" with the first Bush administration to provide higher levels of aid to Israel. I asked Rosen if AIPAC suffered from the affair. He reached across the table. "You see this napkin?" he said. "In twenty-four hours, we could have the signatures of seventy

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senators on this napkin." As I say, arrogant. But there are a hundred or more lobbyists in Washington who could pull off the napkin trick: lobbyists for the gun lobby, and for oil companies and pharmaceutical companies, and for the anti-Castro lobby and the Saudi lobby. And try getting any administration to challenge China's record on human rights. For China, the town is wired in a way that must fill AIPAC with envy. Say the word "China" in Washington, and congressmen, lobbyists, and Cabinet officials all hear the same thing: "summer home."

Mearsheimer and Walt write about the lobbying activities of AIPAC and other Jewish lobbying and advocacy groups as if they had never set foot in the capital. Here is their description of the way in which AIPAC and other pro-Israel groups do their work: "In addition to direct lobbying on Capitol Hill, the lobby rewards or punishes politicians largely through an ability to guide the flow of campaign contributions. Organizations in the lobby also put pressure on the executive branch through a number of mechanisms, including working through government officials who are sympathetic to their views." Imagine that!

One of the most serious charges that Mearsheimer and Walt level at AIPAC and its neoconservative fellow travelers is that they were indispensable in pushing America to invade Iraq. There is no doubt that neoconservatives agitated for the war, and that many neoconservatives are Jews; and there is no doubt that there were Jews, in and out of the Bush administration, who argued for the invasion of Iraq, including Paul Wolfowitz, Scooter Libby, Douglas Feith, and Richard Perle. Is that really all we need to know about the origins of the war? There were also some Christians at the scene, including George W. Bush, Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Condoleezza Rice, Colin Powell, Stephen Hadley, and Richard Myers. Some of those Christians were even in positions to order the invasion!

The assertion that the Iraq war would not have happened except for the lobbying of Jews is an echo of an ancient idea spread by anti-Jewish ideologues: that Jews, operating in the shadows, manipulate gentile leaders to unknowingly advance Jewish interests. In order to believe this in the case of Iraq, the argument would have to be made that Bush, Cheney, and Rumsfeld were not merely idiots, but also uninterested in ruling. A couple of years ago I asked Rumsfeld to comment on accusations that the Jewish lobby maneuvered the administration into war. "I suppose the implication of that is the president and the vice president and myself and Colin Powell just fell off a turnip truck to take these jobs," he said. But Mearsheimer and Walt mention Cheney and Rumsfeld only for fleeting instants in their discussion of the origins of the war. They seem to think that William Kristol is the commander in chief.

The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy further asserts that the Israeli government itself had been arguing vociferously for an American invasion of Iraq since 2001. Mearsheimer and Walt point to public-opinion polls that showed that, across the globe, only the civilian populations of Israel and Kuwait supported the war. They write as if mystified by these findings. It is worth noting that both Kuwait and Israel had been attacked by Saddam Hussein—Kuwait by his army, Israel by his missile force. Perhaps this explains the poll results. And yet the fact is that the Israelis, and the pro-Israel lobby, were focused mainly on the threat from Iran, not Iraq, during the first years of this decade. AIPAC supported the administration in its pursuit of Saddam Hussein, but only after the invasion seemed to be a *fait accompli*. Last month, in an interview, Lawrence Wilkerson, who was Colin Powell's chief of staff at the State Department, and who

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is an adversary of administration neoconservatives, told me that Israel had been consistently warning the administration that Iran was the main threat, not Iraq. "The Israelis tried their best to persuade us that we were focused on the wrong enemy," he said, "and that they were very leery of destroying the balance of power in the Middle East. But once they understood that we were going to war, come hell or high water, they weren't going to get on the wrong side of the president of the United States." (Wilkerson, of course, makes no appearance in this book.)

And yet even the charge that Jewish organizations took us to war in Iraq is not the low point in Mearsheimer and Walt's book. Its most sinister accomplishment is surely the accusation that Al Qaeda attacked America because America supports the Jewish state. Again, Mearsheimer and Walt are convinced that the America-Israel connection is what moves bin Laden. At Politics and Prose, Mearsheimer uttered this remarkable statement: "Osama bin Laden wanted very much to make sure that the attacks struck at Congress, which he saw—quite correctly—as the location of the critical support of the United States for Israel." Mearsheimer seemed pleased, rather than appalled, that bin Laden's analysis of Congress's priorities squared so perfectly with his own.

Yes, bin Laden has Jews on the brain. But he also obsesses about much else. Don't trust me on this; trust the (non-Jewish) experts. "You could take Israel out of the equation and Al Qaeda would still want to attack us," Lawrence Wright, the author of *The Looming Tower*, told me. "Israel is a tremendously powerful recruiting tool, but there are people who are drawn to Al Qaeda for many different motivations. For Zawahiri, the main goal was Egypt. For bin Laden, the main goal was to expel American troops from Saudi Arabia." Richard Clarke, the Al Qaeda expert in the Clinton and Bush administrations, said that "if you look at Al Qaeda's own writing and their public statements, Israel was not a major theme. What they say is pretty clear. They want to eliminate the presence of the 'far enemy'—us—from the Islamic world, because the far enemy props up the 'near enemy,' the moderate Arab states. If they increase the pain on us, they believe that they can topple the Arab regimes. If Israel didn't exist, they'd be doing the same thing." And Peter Bergen, the Al Qaeda expert at the New America Foundation—one of just three Washington think tanks that Mearsheimer and Walt praise for escaping the control of the Israel lobby—told me that, while the Israel-Arab conflict provides strong recruitment, "Pakistan is the epicenter of planning and training, and the Kashmir conflict is the strong engine there." Mearsheimer and Walt claim that the "Zionist-Crusader alliance," the Al Qaeda shorthand for Islam's main enemy, is a reference to the pro-Israel lobby and its Christian Zionist allies in Washington. Bergen disagrees. "I never take it to mean AIPAC. It means Jews, Christians, the People of the Book, the entire West. It's a big concept. I can't remember bin Laden ever mentioning AIPAC."

In their discussion of these matters, Mearsheimer and Walt seem not just mendacious but also shallow. They are dilettantes in the subject, tourists in the conflict. Consider an example. After cherry-picking quotations from jihadists to support the view that America's ties to Israel brought us the attacks of September 11, they raise the subject of Sayyid Qutb's anti-Americanism. Qutb was a terribly important Egyptian Islamist, and Al Qaeda's main intellectual inspiration. Mearsheimer and Walt instruct that "Sayyid Qutb, the Egyptian dissident whose writings have been an important inspiration for contemporary Islamic fundamentalists, was hostile to the United States both because he saw it as a corrupt and licentious society and also because of U.S. support for Israel." But wait. Qutb was executed by the Egyptian government in 1966, almost a year before the Six Day War. It was not until after that war that America replaced France as Israel's chief protector and arms-supplier. In fact, throughout the 1950s, the Eisenhower administration was often quite hostile to Israel. So Qutb's objection, then, was not to American support for Israel, but to American recognition of Israel. If this is the case, then Islamist anger at America predates our support for the usurping Zionists. And if this is so, then Al Qaeda would have attacked the United States whether or not America was Israel's patron, and whether or not the pro-Israel lobby existed. Therefore, as far-fetched as this may seem, the Jews should not be blamed for the attack on the World Trade Center.

One would think that the editors at Farrar, Straus and Giroux might have harpooned this leviathan of a contradiction before it reached print. Unless of course you believe, as I do, that Farrar, Straus and Giroux has all along been allowing Mearsheimer and Walt to undermine their own credibility by promoting their abysmal arguments about Jewish power. The publishing house, you see, is not known to be a part of the Jewish lobby, but its owner, the German company Holtzbrinck, has been emphatically friendly to Israel, in part out of guilt that its founder was a Nazi. Remember, everything is not what it seems. This book about a malevolent conspiracy may itself be the work of a benevolent conspiracy. I mean, *cui bono*? Who really benefits from making anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism seem so indefensible? Come to think of it, the name Mearsheimer does have a bit of a Jewish ring. ◆

Apple

My people are never the same in memory.
They are the dead come back for a picnic,
a table set with plates of sliced apples.
I am there somewhere hidden in a tree.
In my luckless twenties, still raw from heart-
break and prone to constant hard-ons, I watched
through an open window a woman, middle-aged,
naked, except for her utilitarian bra and panties.
Her hair, teased like a hive of cotton candy,
eyelids, a heavy purple coat. I could almost
smell her—vivid as my first kiss: Maile L.
who had in her mouth some cinnamon Red Hots.
The woman's lipstick was thick like car wax
red and cheap in a dime store way.
She was fitting to go to work at some diner.
I was then a college intern for the lame duck
from my district. I was eager for everything
I imagined this woman could teach me.
This was in the city of Cain where we kept
the doors unlocked for alien thoughts to enter.
If she were the first woman, would that make
me the snake? See, the snake in the garden
was a real smoothie with a killer pickup line.
Me, I was just a salamander on a leaf.
This, before I learned my left from my right,
Rilke from Roethke, Keats from Yeats.
And many more years followed when I didn't
understand a thing completely. Memory
is another name for ghosts and their awful hunger.

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Michael Ignatieff

THE DEATH THAT WILL NOT DIE

BLOOD AND SOIL: A WORLD HISTORY OF GENOCIDE AND EXTERMINATION FROM SPARTA TO DARFUR
By Ben Kiernan
(Yale University Press, 768 pp., $40)

A HISTORY OF genocide is bound to leave a reader with gloomy and misanthropic reflections. This world history of genocide from Sparta to Darfur is no exception. Apparently, we humans will set about exterminating each other whenever we have the means, the motive, and the hope of success. This grand cruelty is one of the defining features of our common humanity, in addition to wisdom, dignity, compassion, and all the rest. Ben Kiernan has provided the most extensive history of our genocidal propensities that I have ever read. He starts his history early, with Roman and Greek massacres of barbarians, and works through the Spanish conquest of the Americas, the exterminating vigor of American settlers toward Indians, the Turkish way with the Armenians, the German way with the Jews, Stalin's way with the Ukrainians, the Khmer Rouge's way with the Cambodians, the Serbs' way with the Muslims, the Hutus' way with the Tutsis, and the Sudanese way with the Darfurians.

If you want to know how it was done, where and when it was done, and how many victims there were, Kiernan has the answers. This is a formidable and important book. I am less certain, however, that Kiernan has gotten to the root of the question that raises the issue of misanthropy: namely, why we do this to our own kind with such lamentable enthusiasm and self-righteousness. We have been asking this question since we began killing each other, but we have also been trying to stop, and our attempts to rein in our genocidal propensities go some way toward redeeming our honor as a species.

Many of our best institutions—the constitutional state, for example, and its guarantees of equal rights for all—are prudential responses by wise men and women to their discovery of our predilections for massacre if we are left unconstrained. Responding to the challenge of genocide was a prime motivation for the new institutions created after 1945: the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Genocide Convention, the International Criminal Court, the state of Israel, and so on. The social harmony achieved in western democracies since 1945 is an achievement in the face of the horror left behind by genocidal ideology. If we now praise multiculturalism and make a virtue out of the fact that people of different races, religions, languages, and cultures live together in most if not all democracies, it is because we take this as a rebuke to a disgraced alternative: one land for one people, to be achieved, if necessary, by slaughter.

Any history of genocide has to be balanced with the history of our halting attempts to take the measure of this propensity in ourselves and to set up dikes, institutional and moral, against the temptation. At the same time, we have to recognize how far we still have to go before we get the terrible temptation under control. The creators of the Genocide Convention and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights assumed that juridical denunciation and proscription of the crime would reduce the human propensity to commit the deed. But still the killings go on, even as the International Criminal Court and many states have enacted penalties against genocide and, in the cases of Rwanda and Bosnia, secured the first convictions. So the crime has been proscribed morally, and enforcement measures improve, and yet it continues apace. The abandon with which mass killing continues suggests that something is not sufficient about the judicial response to the crime.

It would be ridiculous to belittle the attempts we have made to bring genocidal killers to courts of law. There are good reasons to bring killers to justice even if we cannot be sure that doing so will reduce the propensity of others to kill. We seek justice against genocide to demonstrate that the victims matter, that their memory is sacred to us, that we stand always with them and never with their butchers. This symbolic function of the judicial response to genocide is always and everywhere valuable. Yet it does not change the fact that judicial responses—attempting to increase the certainty of punishment—do not appear to mitigate the human propensity to resort to extermination as a final solution. One of the crucial explanatory puzzles in the history of genocide, one that Kiernan does not actually address, is why, in the post-1945 period at least, the universal authoritative de-legitimation of genocide has failed. Even at this late date, after all that we know, it remains a regular feature of world politics.

We should work ourselves free of the fantasy, dear to international lawyers and human rights activists, that we will someday live in a world where international law succeeds in extirpating genocide and mass killing. Instead of betting on justice to get the better of genocide, we ought to wager instead on a range of other options: the spread of development and democracy; the entrenchment of constitutional freedoms in as many countries as possible; population limitation; universal education; measures to control climate change. (Why climate change? Because, as Darfur seems to prove, share conflicts over resources are being made worse by desertification and climate change. Global warming will inflame genocidal propensities wherever human groups are under intensifying environmental pressure on scarce resources of water, food, and land.)

Understanding how all these measures might help is important. But it is also important to understand the rationale, the logic, even the seductiveness of genocide as an instrument of politics. The crime of genocide is a big crime, and so it needs big reasons for it to be committed. Those who do the butchering, shooting, or gassing need powerful ideological aromatics to overcome the revulsion, horror, pity, and sympathy that invariably arise when we see one of our own kind being killed. It is too simple to regard the perpetrators as merely dehumanized: the perplexity is rather that they are human but do it anyway. Ideology is the handmaiden of all genocides, because instinctual revulsion toward the act is bound to be strong in all but the most sadistic perpetrators. Since there are never quite enough of these, there must be arguments and symbols and myths capable of recruiting other, less brutal accomplices to bring about what is always a large-scale operation, requiring many willing hands.

Kiernan's major argument about these ideological justifications—the "blood and soil" of his title—is that the genocidal

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project, whether under the Romans or the Rwandans, begins with the fantasy of a piece of land belonging exclusively to a people of a certain blood relation. This fantasy appeals to the idea of human identity according to which people can only be truly who they are if their culture and their traditions are connected to a particular soil, and if they possess this soil to the exclusion of everyone else. The project is always a fantasy, because invariably the land in question is inhabited by someone else. Zion is never empty. Paradise is never unoccupied. Eden is never vacant. Anyone seeking to create Zion, Paradise, or Eden on earth must figure out what to do with the inconvenient fact that there are others already there, others who came before you. Those people are real human beings, with equally strong attachments to the land. They are, moreover, just as human as you, and therefore just as resistant to change as you know yourself to be.

For this reason, someone wishing to build Paradise on earth comes to realize that there are only four options: live with the people who stand in the way, educate and assimilate them, drive them out, or exterminate them. Genocide is best understood, then, as the fourth and most radically ruthless consequence of utopian political fantasy. Kiernan captures this idea very well:

> Racism becomes genocidal when perpetrators imagine a world without certain kinds of people in it. A similar metaphysic marks some other forms of idealist thinking and action: the rejection of a real historical community or a retreat from everyday life in favor of an imagined vision or idea. Pastoralism is a related ideal in that it often eliminates inhabitants from a landscape.

Paradise, when seen through the eyes of an exterminator, is a world without fear, without anxiety, without threat from others. Paradise is paradise because only you and I are in it and we are both the same. The serpent in Paradise is the others. Faced with them, genocidal extremists will then lay hold of racial stereotypes to create the basis for the thought that these people do not deserve to be on the land, and from there it is not far to thinking that they do not deserve to live. Genocide is a form of politics in the service of a vision of Paradise. It is a form of nation-building, if you will—a type of violence that is ultimately an instrument of the most powerful utopia men have ever created for themselves: a world without enemies.

I would not present this as a universal typology of genocides. Kiernan makes it clear that there are a variety of motives and situations in which mass exterminations occur. There is no point in pouring all the forms of genocide into one unwieldy classification. Yet it is worth insisting that genocide be seen as a darkly seductive form of nation-building or community-formation, driven by the fantasy of a world without enemies. This is what makes genocide such a recurring temptation: it appeals to very deep-seated human desires to live in security and peace with your own.

If this helps us to understand why so many human groups have succumbed to the genocidal temptation, it is important also to stress that many human groups do not succumb at all. After all, not everyone thinks of the other as an enemy. *Judenrein* societies—places where the other is driven out or killed—remain the exception rather than the rule. Cohabitation between races and religions is as frequent in history as enforced mono-ethnicity. Let copulation thrive, Shakespeare said, and when it does, the barriers between races, peoples, and languages come down.

While genocide remains a possible solution to the problem of dealing with people different than yourself, it is not the only possible solution. Human beings throughout the ages have refused to fear the other, and found the other enticing and appealing, and sought to bed the other and to learn from the other—and to exploit the other, of course, but also to change in interaction with the other. A theory of genocide has to explain the extremists, but it also has to explain those who refuse the extreme. A theory of genocide, to have any explanatory power, must explain why genocide occurs in some situations and why it does not in others.

Consider a particular case, the European settlement of North America. The pattern was not universally genocidal. The encounter between Europeans and aboriginals began in fear, developed into curiosity, flourished in mutual aid and learning, curdled into suspicion, exploded into war, and only then—and not always—ended in genocidal fury. Only extremists believed, at any given moment, that the only solution to the presence of the Indians was wholesale extermination. In many contexts of white-Indian interaction, the pattern was "live and let live." When extremists arose claiming that "live and let live" was impossible, reasonable voices were raised to contest the exterminatory logic of the extremists. Kiernan cites a wonderful example of this. In 1763, after conflict between settlers and Indians in Pennsylvania, Benjamin Franklin wrote a telling rebuttal of the arguments that he must have been hearing all around him in favor of a genocidal reprisal against Indians:

> If an *Indian* injures me, … does it follow that I may revenge that Injury on all *Indians*? It is well known that Indians are of different Tribes, Nations and Languages, as well as the White People. In *Europe*, if the *French*, who are White People, should injure the *Dutch*, are they to revenge it on the *English*, because they too are white People? The only crime of these poor Wretches seems to have been, that they had a reddish-brown Skin, and black Hair; and some People of that Sort, it seems, had murdered some of our Relations. If it be right to kill Men for such a Reason, then, should any Man, with a freckled Face and red Hair, kill a Wife or Child of mine, it would be right for me to revenge it, by killing all the freckled red Haired Men, Women and Children.

If Franklin was able to see through the contemptible non sequiturs lurking in the exterminatory rhetoric on the frontier, more humble Americans could have done so as well. If genocide is a fantasy, requiring violent actions to force reality to approximate some desired state of ethnic cleanliness, only some people fall for the fantasy; others see through it clearly. Kiernan has much to say about perpetrators, but he says very little about opponents, such as Franklin, who raised their voices against the genocidal fantasy.

Only some dreams of blood and soil end in exterminatory violence. Others end in inter-ethnic accommodation and varieties of nationalism. Hostility between groups who compete for land and resources does not always end in massacre. We need to understand why multi-ethnic cooperation is as much the rule of human life as genocide. Kiernan's catalogue of nightmarish events would have had more capacity to help us to predict (though history is hardly an exact science) the situations in which genocidal fantasy turns deadly if he had dealt with the cases where the most fearsome elements of our nature were defeated by the best.

ANTHONY RUSSO

Kiernan's learned misanthropic story also scants

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the interesting and dire question of how survivors of extermination manage to live on afterward. Perhaps this question lies beyond the bounds of the task he set for himself; but still it is a fact that no genocides are ever, strictly speaking, complete. There are always survivors, and how they survive—how, indeed, they often triumph over their perpetrators—is an important theme in any history of genocide. In this regard, Kiernan might find it interesting to reflect on Jonathan Lear's luminous book *Radical Hope*, a philosophical study of the memoirs of an American Crow Indian chief. This leader lived through the actual end, between 1850 and 1880, of his nomadic civilization. Genocidal massacre by settlers was part of the fatal destiny of the Crow, but only a part. What the settlers failed to do was finally accomplished by warfare with the Sioux, and microbial devastation at the hand of disease, and finally cantonment in reservations.

Lear asks a fundamental question: how do survivors of civilizational catastrophes such as genocide manage so often to preserve the memory of what has been destroyed, to rebuild their civilizations, and, in so doing, to write the history that vindicates them and not their tormentors? Hitler is condemned to eternal infamy, while those he tormented have been redeemed by the tireless work of human remembrance. To the question of why survivors of extermination are so extraordinarily tenacious, Lear answers that human beings have a specific capacity to retain hope in the face of the loss of all that they hold dear. He calls this "radical hope," the human capacity to imagine the conditions of survival, for oneself and for one's traditions, even when no survival, no afterwards, seems conceivable.

The Crow chief whose memoir Lear analyzes did not know how his people would survive the white man's coming, but he knew that they would survive. Guided by this hope, he led his people into a future neither he nor they could possibly imagine. History has vindicated them, as it has vindicated so many survivors of slaughter and devastation. The Crow live on; their culture endures. So do many of the other peoples visited with exterminatory zeal. They have lived to have the last word because they have proved capable of radical hope. Any history of genocide that does not include a mention of radical hope is not being true to the unfathomable duality of human beings, their capacity for exterminatory fantasy and their ability to keep on hoping when all hope is gone. ◆

Ruth Franklin

PERMANENT GROPING

EXIT GHOST
By Philip Roth
(Houghton Mifflin, 304 pp., $26)

I.

Pop quiz: guess the writer. Born in Newark in the 1930s to a middle-class Jewish family, by the age of twenty-three he had provoked the ire of his former friends and neighbors with a handful of brilliant stories that mercilessly skewered Jewish characters as narrow-minded, repressed, and provincial. A provocative best-seller about sex and the Jewish mother brought him fame, fortune, and the attention of beautiful actresses. Along the way he picked up and discarded several wives, but around age sixty he exiled himself to rural life far from New York City, emerging only to publish, with remarkable regularity, a parade of novels that have earned him recognition as one of the greatest living American writers.

Anyone with even a passing interest in contemporary fiction would likely identify Philip Roth from this description. But that is the wrong answer. I am in fact thinking of Nathan Zuckerman, who has served as Roth's doppelgänger, mouthpiece, straw man, and Grand (or not so grand) Inquisitor for more than half of this writer's remarkable, tumultuous career.

But the quiz isn't really fair, is it? Well, neither is the increasingly tiresome game of metafictional cat-and-mouse that Roth has been playing with his readers for almost three decades. The series of "Zuckerman novels"—which began in 1979 with *The Ghost Writer* and apparently ends now with the publication of *Exit Ghost*, the ninth and supposedly last of Zuckerman's escapades—has served Roth as both a bully pulpit and a peep show. While haranguing his readers about the unbreachable chasm between life and art and ceaselessly ridiculing those sorry literalists who would dare to read his biography into his fiction, he has also titillated them with the apparent disclosure of ever more correspondences between Zuckerman and himself. All their noisy provocations notwithstanding, the Zuckerman novels were always based on a tease.

At its worst—the self-absorbed excess of *Zuckerman Unbound* and *The Anatomy Lesson*, the second and third installments of the "Zuckerman Bound" trilogy, devoted to cataloguing the tribulations of Zuckerman's fame and the ignorance of all those who surround him—the Zuckerman charade has felt like a mean-spirited literary trick, in which the reader cannot resist regarding Zuckerman as his author's puppet and yet loathes herself for falling into the trap as Roth/Zuckerman argues ever more stridently for the difference between his life and his novels. "Mother, you know you are yourself and not Mrs. Carnovsky, and I know that you are yourself and not Mrs. Carnovsky," Zuckerman tells his long-suffering mother when she complains that her friends assume she is the model for the caricaturishly overbearing Jewish mother in his best-seller, an obvious stand-in for *Portnoy's Complaint*. "You and I know that it was very nearly heaven thirty years ago." Who describes adolescence as "very nearly heaven"? This is Zuckerman (and Roth) at his least convincing. Anyway, the question of reality and imagination in art, of mimesis and artifice in the novel, is the oldest question of all. Where is the intellectual excitement in merely repeating the question again and again?

Still, in some of the Zuckerman books the Zuckerman persona can feel altogether essential, a brilliant dramatization of the layers of mediation that always exist between author and reader. Consider *The Ghost Writer*, in which Zuckerman is a twenty-three-year-old aspiring writer making a pilgrimage to the home of his literary hero E. I. Lonoff, whose uncompromising approach to the writing life offers a model to which Zuckerman will aspire for the rest of his life. The isolated, publicity-shunning Lonoff has posted a line from Henry James's story "The Middle Years" on the wall of his study like a benediction: "We work in the dark—we do what we can—the rest is the madness of art." In Lonoff, whose only occupation is to "turn sentences around," Zuckerman perceives the perfect separation of life and art, which in his own brief career have already become messily entangled.

After he published a story in *The New Yorker* negatively depicting Jewish

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characters, Zuckerman received a hostile letter from Judge Leopold Wapter, a self-appointed pillar of the community, which asked him point-blank: "If you had been living in Nazi Germany in the thirties, would you have written such a story?" Alone later that evening in Lonoff's study, he attempts to write a defense to his father, but is interrupted by a conversation in the room above between Lonoff and a beautiful young woman named Amy Bellette, who has taken refuge in Lonoff's house for reasons unknown to Zuckerman, and who appears to be pleading with Lonoff to leave his wife for her. Afterward Zuckerman curses himself—not for his eavesdropping, but for the poverty of his own imagination. "Oh, if only I could have imagined the scene I'd overheard! If only I could invent as presumptuously as real life! . . . But if I ever did, what then would they think of me, my father and his judge?"

And then he proceeds to do just that. Around the mysterious figure of Amy Bellette, Zuckerman concocts a fantasy so strange it could almost be true: he imagines the beautiful young woman with the "fetching" accent to be Anne Frank, who has miraculously survived the Holocaust only to find, in America, her own version of undesired literary celebrity. As the ultimate comeback to his father and the judge, he marries her. "Oh, how I have misunderstood my son," Nathan imagines his father saying. "How mistaken we have been!"

In an exquisitely imagined scene, Zuckerman pictures Amy/Anne reading in *Time* magazine of her diary's publication and deciding not to contact her father, because she knows that if she were discovered to be alive, the power of her work would dissipate. "Were [the diary] known to be the work of a living writer, it would never be more than it was: a young teenager's diary of her trying years in hiding," Zuckerman muses. "But dead she had something more to offer than amusement for ages 10–15; dead she had written, without meaning to or trying to, a book with the force of a masterpiece to make people finally see." She chose to hide her identity, he imagines, for the sake of her art. And that is what makes her the perfect bride for young Nathan Zuckerman: like him, she is willing to sacrifice her family—or, more exactly, to disavow her father—for her work.

But with this tidy bit of fictional revisionism, Zuckerman inadvertently acknowledges what he has been exerting himself so strenuously to deny. For despite what Zuckerman, Roth, or any other writer might wish, the biographical data of a writer cannot help but influence the reception of his or her work. It does matter that Anne Frank's diary was written by a teenager who died in the Holocaust, and not by a twenty-six-year-old who emigrated to America and is "doing very well." And it matters that *Goodbye, Columbus* and "The Conversion of the Jews" were written not by Goebbels, as Judge Wapter's letter hyperbolically suggests, but by a young Jewish man from Newark. Perhaps it should not matter, and if one were to judge the works solely by aesthetic criteria, perhaps it would not matter. Perhaps there exists, somewhere in a lonely corner of the ivory tower, a reader capable of hewing to such a pristine practice. But I am inclined to agree with another of Roth's characters, a vicious critic called Milton Appel (who bears a certain resemblance to Irving Howe, the critic who ferociously withdrew his initial support for Roth): "I know that there's a difference between characters and authors; but I also know that grown-ups should not pretend that it's quite the difference they tell their students it is." Nobody, not Henry James and not E. I. Lonoff, reads or writes literature in a vacuum.

The Counterlife, the fifth Zuckerman novel, pursued the exercise in metafiction to a kind of vanishing point. The book begins with Zuckerman imagining the death of his younger brother, Henry, during heart surgery. The medication Henry had been taking for his heart condition had rendered him impotent, and to fix this condition he chose to undergo a risky bypass operation—not for the sake of his marriage (despite the version his wife gives in her eulogy), but to continue his affair with his assistant. The second and third chapters offer an alternate life-path for Henry: in this version, he has survived the operation only to desert both wife and girlfriend several months later and emigrate to Israel, where he joins a militant band of settlers on the West Bank. And the fourth chapter opens up yet another alternate reality. Here Nathan finds himself in almost precisely the predicament in which Henry had been in the first section, though with a twist. Impotent, he is conducting an unconsummated affair with the young mother who lives in the apartment upstairs from him, a gentile woman (named Maria, no less) from Britain.

Like Henry, Nathan dies on the operating table in pursuit of sexual fulfillment, and after his funeral Henry—who is neither dead nor in Israel, but still more or less happily married to his wife—steals from Nathan's apartment the manuscript of his most recent book, the opening chapter of which (just like *The Counterlife*) recounts Henry's infidelities in meticulous detail. Henry is infuriated to discover that Nathan has shamelessly plundered the facts of his life without even bothering to change the names: "This exceeded everything, the worst imaginable abuse of 'artistic liberty.'" Maria, too, sneaks into Zuckerman's apartment to read the book, and is particularly intrigued by its fifth chapter, which presents a fantasy version of their future married life in England, complete with a house in London and a baby on the way. But she is by far the more sympathetic reader. Early on in their relationship, she had asked him, "You won't write about me, will you?" "I can't write 'about' anyone," he told her. "Even when I try it comes out someone else." (Tell it to Henry.) After reading the novel, she has a long conversation with an invisible interlocutor who turns out to be Zuckerman's ghost. She tells him that she was angered by some of the distortions in the novel, but that she forgives him for it, having understood the essential truth of Zuckerman's slippage between fiction and reality:

> I began to wonder which was real, the woman in the book or the one I was pretending to be upstairs. Neither of them was particularly "me." I was acting just as much upstairs; I was not myself just as much as Maria in the book was not myself. Perhaps she was. I began not to know which was true and which was not, like a writer when he comes to believe that he's imagined what he hasn't.

It seems an ominous coincidence that this novel appeared in 1986, during the heyday of the postmodernists in English departments in the United States. Roth has never expressed any love for them or their theories, but his project has been weirdly similar to theirs: to shake our confidence in the distinction between true and false, to garble the categories of "truth" and "literature." Such a campaign is much more than an affirmation of the imagination. Its result is to lead the reader into a kind of weightless literary wonderland, where words neither mean what they say nor say what they mean. Sometimes this clever program of confusion may be, in its way, a truthful representation of reality; but sometimes it is a highly skilled variety of cynicism, or just plain nonsense.

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II.

The Nathan Zuckerman of the early novels was a credible figure: a frenetically intelligent, haplessly neurotic young Jewish writer, enough of a type to be recognizable, yet idiosyncratic enough to be original. But the effusive, multi-layered re-imaginings of *The Counterlife* marked a break of sorts, after which Zuckerman's personhood dwindles. He shows up to offer an ironic commentary on Roth's autobiography *The Facts*, another concoction of metafiction that finally feels like a very long time spent in the seminar room with Professor Roth debating the "reality" of literature. Here Zuckerman is fulfilling the dream of *The Counterlife*, which was apparently not a fantasy after all: he is still married to Maria, and she is still pregnant. He tells Roth, with a generous helping of irony, that he should stick to fiction: "Your medium for the really merciless self-evisceration, your medium for genuine self-confrontation, is me." Maria puts it more directly: "Surely there must come a point where even *he* is bored with his own life's story."

As if in response, the next three Zuckerman novels were in a decidedly different vein. His powerful "American trilogy"—*American Pastoral, I Married a Communist, The Human Stain*—is narrated by Zuckerman, but the main figure of each novel is a character only tangentially connected to him. And in marked contrast to the first Zuckerman trilogy, he offers very little information about his own circumstances. We know only that he has grown weary of life in New York and has retired to a two-room cabin on a mountain in the Berkshires, where he devotes his days entirely to writing, Lonoff-like, with little social interaction. The period of isolation predates only slightly his diagnosis with prostate cancer, the treatment for which has left him impotent and incontinent. His parents, we know, are dead; his latest marriage (if it ever occurred) is apparently over; his child (if it ever existed) has been forgotten.

Zuckerman's abandonment of his inner life as a primary subject for his fiction makes sense in these novels, and indeed it comes as a bit of a relief. Swede Levov and Ira Ringold and Coleman Silk are not just more Zuckerman spawn, ever-multiplying fictional replicas of the same model; each is a fully imagined character with his own experiences and his own wounds, his own persuasive interiority. Zuckerman, by contrast, is not required to be a real character in these books: he is nothing more than a framing device, a teller for the tale, a ghost in the literary machine. It is not entirely clear what purpose Zuckerman serves as the narrator of these novels: could they not have been told successfully without him in the background, as less coy and more straightforward narratives, with a conventionally authoritative narrator? You could argue, of course, that the inherently subjective and fallible Zuckerman, the exemplar of the unreliable narrator, provides a useful check on the racing motor of these novels, usefully interrupting their smooth trajectory to remind us that people are unknowable, and that memory is fraught with failures; but it is worth noting also that those same deep themes have been brilliantly treated in novels that do not resort to such games and contraptions.

Exit Ghost—as its title implies—is a throwback: a novel in which Zuckerman is once again the chief actor. It begins with the return to New York of the writer, who is now seventy-one and has been in his self-imposed exile for eleven years, ever since (we now learn) he began receiving anti-Semitic death threats at his Upper West Side apartment. (It seems quite implausible that he would never have mentioned this as a reason for leaving in any of the previous three novels, until one remembers that Zuckerman is not meant to be a real character.) He has come back to the city to undergo a medical procedure that holds out the promise of restoring his bladder function, a particularly humiliating casualty of the prostatectomy. (Roth has never spared the grisly details of bodily functions, and Zuckerman's humiliation pains the reader with every mention of his plastic briefs and soaked cotton pads.) Coming out of the doctor's office, he has a visitation from the past: an elderly woman with "wraithlike looks," wearing a hospital gown styled to look like a dress, her head half-shaved and traced with a surgical scar.

The woman is Amy Bellette, whom Zuckerman recognizes at once, despite not having seen her since that night at Lonoff's house nearly fifty years before. All he knows of her is that after that evening, Lonoff left his wife and lived with Amy for five years, until his death from cancer, writing a novel that was never published. But instead of approaching her, Zuckerman goes to a restaurant, where he discovers in *The New York Review of Books* an advertisement placed by a couple who wish to trade their Upper West Side apartment for a "quiet rural retreat." Impulsively, he calls the number.

SCIENCE AND ETHICS

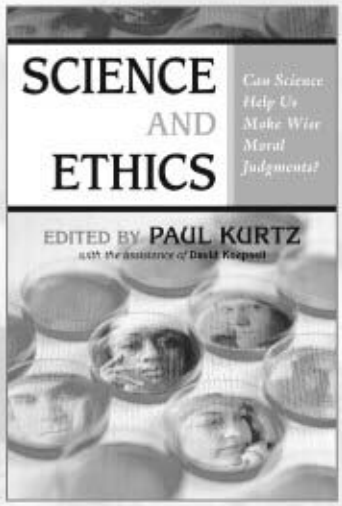
Can Science Help Us Make Wise Moral Judgments?

Edited by Paul Kurtz
with the assistance of David Koepsell
359 pp /ISBN 978-1-59102-537-5 / PB / $21

In a world confronted by conflicting moral values, the question is often raised, "Can science help us solve our moral problems?" Many insist that morality is derived from religion. Critics point out that the believers in God often violently disagree. Many scientists hold that there are no ethical standards implicit in science.

Paul Kurtz maintains that naturalistic ethics is directly relevant to both science and ethics. This book focuses on the bio-tech revolution.

Among the 30 contributors are Mario Bunge, Arthur Caplan, Thomas Szasz, and Susan Haack.



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The wife is Jamie Logan, a thirty-year-old beauty with a story published in *The New Yorker*, with whom Zuckerman falls headlong into infatuation.

If Henry James was the patron saint of *The Ghost Writer*, the presiding spirit of *Exit Ghost* is Conrad, whose novella *The Shadow-Line*—about a seaman who quits his job and then changes his mind, only to find himself put in charge of a cursed ship—is invoked as a kind of touchstone. "The drama that is associated usually with the young as they fully begin to enter life … can also startle and lay siege to the aged (including the aged resolutely armed against *all* drama), even as circumstance readies them for departure," Zuckerman muses. In addition to the drama of his longing for Jamie—an "affair" that will take place entirely in his imagination—he finds himself also thrust suddenly back into literary politics when Jamie's friend Richard Kliman asks to interview him about E. I. Lonoff. Kliman plans to write a biography of Lonoff that will reveal the writer's dark secret: an incestuous relationship with his half-sister. (Lonoff has been thought to be a stand-in for Bernard Malamud, but in death he takes on shades of Henry Roth.) Kliman has apparently deduced this from reading Lonoff's unpublished novel, thus proving himself to be just the sort of literary critic that Zuckerman has always hated. "The dirt-seeking snooping calling itself research is just about the lowest of literary rackets," he tells Kliman, who retorts, "And the savage snooping calling itself fiction?"

And so we return to the old merry-go-round, which has gotten creakier in the years since *The Ghost Writer* but still shows no sign of coming to a halt. The figures in *Exit Ghost*—Amy Bellette, Jamie Logan, Richard Kliman, Zuckerman himself—serve primarily as pegs on which Zuckerman hangs his favorite obsessions: the relationship between life and art, and the relationship between a man and a woman. The link between creative genius and sexual power has been a crucial aspect of Zuckerman's self-definition from the start. "When I came upon Babel's description of the Jewish writer as a man with autumn in his heart and spectacles on his nose," he told us in *The Ghost Writer*, "I had been inspired to add, 'and blood in his penis,' and had then recorded the words like a challenge—a flaming Dedalian formula to ignite *my* soul's smithy."

The youthful Zuckerman was as yet unaware of the severe limitations of such a formula. If a writer defines himself by the blood in his penis, what happens when that vein runs dry? One response is the way Zuckerman has conducted his life up till now: retreating to his mountain to live and write in solitude, focusing his creative energies on the stories of others. The second is the one that is explored in *Exit Ghost*: to throw himself once again into the desperate pursuit of what he cannot have. The bitterness of this futile exercise evokes the novel's most intense moments. "'The center of gravity,'" Zuckerman quotes Chekhov, "'should reside in two: he and she.' It should. It has. It won't ever again."

There is no denying the pathos of Zuckerman's frustrated desire, his compulsion to dive "into the mutability *again*" despite his knowledge that he is no longer capable. But the fixation on Jamie Logan is a very slight support on which to rest the burden of this book. Zuckerman finds his outlet in writing a series of short dramatic sketches called *He and She*, in which the main figures—named only by those pronouns, but obviously Jamie and Zuckerman—banter and flirt. Their conversation is agonizingly superficial, focusing mainly on Jamie's experience with men; and when it gets to literary matters, it becomes even sillier. "Anyone who's famous, everyone knows everything about them—so they think," Jamie tells Zuckerman. "But with you, you've written these things that make you famous among a certain group of people. You're no Tom Cruise." (He responds, preposterously, "Who's Tom Cruise?") The real-life Jamie Logan, by contrast, is drawn far more believably: she politely rebuffs Zuckerman's advances.

But Zuckerman is deeply affected by his writings about Jamie, which he seems to regard as both more satisfying and more "true" than a real-life affair:

> The conversations she and I don't have [are] more affecting even than the conversations we do have, and the imaginary "She" [is] vividly at the middle of her character as the actual "she" will never be. But isn't one's pain quotient shocking enough without fictional amplification, without giving things an intensity that is ephemeral in life and sometimes even unseen? Not for some. For some very, very few that amplification, evolving uncertainty out of nothing, constitutes their only assurance, and the unlived, the surmise, fully drawn in print on paper, is the life whose meaning comes to matter most.

What Roth seems to be offering here is a defense of the whole Zuckerman project. If the way one conducts one's life is sometimes no more real than fiction, as Maria discovered in *The Counterlife*, then why shouldn't the "unlived" life be equally as real? And so Zuckerman himself, the "ghost writer" of Roth's fiction, becomes more real to the reader than his creator. The writer need not choose between life and art; he can live just as fully—if not more so— through his creations.

Like the writer in James's story "The Middle Years," from which Lonoff's motto in *The Ghost Writer* was derived, Zuckerman is preoccupied with the way he will be remembered after he dies. And like *Everyman*, Roth's previous novel, *Exit Ghost* seeks to dramatize the violence wreaked by age. Zuckerman's cotton pads and Amy's surgical scar are nowhere near as harrowing as the deterioration that has begun to take place in their minds. In the novel's most powerful scene, Zuckerman visits Amy in the squalid walk-up that she now inhabits, filled with relics from her time with Lonoff: his reading chair, his desk lamp. She tells him that she has lived all her life still in love with Lonoff, needing no interlocutor other than his voice in her head, until the tumor came "and I couldn't hear him, not above the incessant roar." Zuckerman, too, imagines a visitation from Lonoff's ghost as he enters Amy's apartment, though in his case Lonoff, like the "compound ghost" in Eliot's "Little Gidding," has come to warn him about the fate of the writer in old age: "For last year's words belong to last year's language / And next year's words await another voice." Zuckerman claims not to remember the "frightful prophecy" that follows in the poem, but Amy provides him with epitaph enough: "Reading/writing people, we are finished, we are ghosts witnessing the end of the literary era," she reports that Lonoff has told her.

Is Zuckerman truly finished? The novel gives indications that this is so, though it leaves a typical Rothian loophole. Zuckerman, we discover, has lost control not only of his bladder, but also of his memory: he has begun to forget everyday words, and carries with him a notebook to remind himself of conversations and errands. He describes the work of writing as "permanent groping," a "labor every day against the threat of incoherence." This is the point at which one feels obligated to say that of course this must be Zuckerman speaking, not Roth, because this novel could not have been written by a man not in possession of his full faculties. But aesthetically speaking, alas, this is not entirely so. There are wonderful moments in

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Exit Ghost, but there are also passages of great tedium; and some of the details of contemporary life, on which Roth always prides himself, here ring oddly offkey. (The discussions of current events, particularly a strange scene in which Zuckerman watches the 2004 election returns with Jamie and her husband, contain some real howlers.)

Still, Roth being Roth, it does not seem impossible that he might have done this on purpose. How better to illustrate Zuckerman's decline than to have him produce a bad novel? But I find it hard to believe that even Roth, whatever his love for trickery, would surrender his talent to such a perversion. Yet is one really to think that Roth, in Zuckerman's voice, speaks of his own deterioration? In some of his recent books, it is true, an elegiac tone has come to the fore; but still it seems unfathomable that the writer who not so long ago produced works as stimulating and varied as *Sabbath's Theater*, *American Pastoral*, and *The Human Stain*—works that have so quickly become touchstones of contemporary American fiction—could be resigned, at the age of seventy-four, to his literary retirement. If Roth truly wishes to demonstrate once and for all the gulf that separates him from his alter ego, he must give up the ghost. Nathan Zuckerman must die. And as the puerile provocateur rests in peace, his restless creator may continue to flourish. ◆

Alan Wolfe

BRAINS AND BELIEFS

HEAD AND HEART: AMERICAN CHRISTIANITIES
By Garry Wills
(Penguin Press, 626 pp., $29.95)

Read the recent books making the case against religion, and you might think that the biggest conflict in this country is between those who believe and those who do not. Listen to evangelicals proclaiming that they have every right to question Mitt Romney's Mormonism, and you might conclude that the biggest disagreements are between one religion and another. Garry Wills has another point to make. The argument of *Head and Heart* is that we are hopelessly divided not over religions and not between religions, but within religions. American Christianity in general, and American Protestantism more specifically, has always contained two currents, two wings—one that appeals to logic and reason, and another that appeals to emotion and belonging.

Every era in American history, Wills maintains, has witnessed a struggle between these two ways of understanding what God is said to want of us. Every era, that is, except the first one. Wills calls the form of religion that appeals to the head "enlightened" and the other kind "evangelical." Yet, as Wills acknowledges, such terms do not apply to the period that began with the Puritan establishment and ended with the Great Awakening. There can be no enlightened religion without an Enlightenment, and since the Puritans established themselves here before the *philosophes* started writing the *Encyclopædia*, their theology was too imprisoning of the intellectual to be called thoughtful. Nonetheless, Wills argues, the Puritan intellect "would forge tools later useful to the Enlightenment," especially its insistence on individualism and its taste for scholasticism. If the Puritans were not really enlightened, moreover, the Awakening, for all its fervent revivals, was not completely evangelical, since it attracted serious thinkers such as Jonathan Edwards and never really broke with Puritan theology. Genuine Enlightenment religion would not come to this country until men such as John Adams began to question the Trinity and its conceptions of an all-powerful and sin-obsessed God.

The era in which the United States was created therefore offers a better fit for Wills's dichotomy. Not only did it feature Adams's Unitarianism, it also allowed a prominent role for Quakerism. Wills dedicates his book to one of the lesser-known members of the Society of Friends, Anthony Benezet (1718–1784), a French Huguenot who was an early opponent of slavery, a genuine humanitarian, and an exponent of religious tolerance. Whether Benezet is, as Wills calls him, "the one unquestionably authentic American saint" is for those more interested than myself in beatifying people to judge; but, as a native Philadelphian, I can testify to the extraordinary legacy left by this most enlightened of religions. For Wills, Deists such as Jefferson and Paine should also be included in the Enlightenment camp. Although activists on the Christian right insist that the United States was founded on Christian principles—some of them go so far as to suggest that the Founders were evangelicals—Wills points out that this country actually experienced a decline, perhaps its only decline, in evangelicalism during the late eighteenth century. This gave adherents to Enlightenment visions of the faith their chance, and they took it, creating the world's first, and most successful, society committed to disestablishmentarianism.

The Transcendentalists were, in Wills's account, people of the head rather than people of the heart: "Emerson said he was all of the future and none of the past. But he could not escape the Puritan spell." Instead, he took key assumptions of Puritan theology, such as the notion that God is directly involved in the business of salvation, and translated them into Transcendental terms. Or consider the Transcendentalists' worship of nature: in this, too, they were following the Puritan reverence for the beauty contained in wild things. They were also elitists—in search, after all, of the American "scholar," not the common man to whom the evangelicals were appealing. Long before Massachusetts developed its reputation as the home of Kerry voters and Volvo drivers, it had the reputation of Brook Farm and Walden Pond.

Too effete for the common people, Transcendentalism could not compete with what Wills calls "do-it-yourself religion," which is as good a term as any for the evangelical revival of the nineteenth century. The camp meeting, the calls for a personal relationship with Jesus, the preacher as entrepreneur, the reliance on means of mass communication: all these phenomena helped evangelicals to spread their faith as the country expanded westward and as democracy radiated through the land. Even the Civil War could not stop the fervor. If anything, the passions unleashed by the Civil War led to evangelical revivals all over the place; white Southerners defending slavery, New England and Midwest abolitionists attacking it, and slaves themselves living with and reacting against the chains holding them down—all, with different aims and leaders, were colored by the evangelical spirit of the times.

The Gilded Age had its own version of the same struggle. On the one hand there was the Social Gospel and its close ties with the Progressive movement; on the other, the homespun Populism of William Jennings Bryan and his unbending faith in Jesus. America's two religious sensibilities were so powerful that they

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spilled out of their religious boundaries into politics: both Progressivism and Populism are usually located on the left, but one was elitist, urban, bookish, and Northern, while the other was popular, revivalist, rural, and Southern.

And so we come, as the reader all along knows we will, to the culture wars of the twentieth century. Those wars have their origin in the fundamentalist protest against modernity, where it is not difficult to see the forces lining up to support Wills's argument. In one corner stands biblical literalism, pre-Millennialism, male chauvinism, American exceptionalism, anti-Catholicism, and political conservatism. In the other: biblical scholarship, post-Millennialism, internationalism, religious toleration, gender equality, and political liberalism. (Pre-Mills and post-Mills differed on when Jesus would return to earth: for the former, his arrival is imminent and, aside from personal redemption, there is little we can do to prepare; for the latter, his arrival is far off and we can improve the social world before he comes.) From the 1920s until the 1980s, the Enlightenment camp thought it was winning the struggle. Only in the past few decades has it begun to realize the extent to which it was routed.

Wills ends his account not with Jerry Falwell on one side and followers of Reinhold Niebuhr on the other, but with Karl Rove. The election of 2000 was a turning point for Wills. Americans sometimes say they are a religious country, but in 2000 they actually became one, and it was all the work of Rove. Did Wills write his entire book to defend the religion of the head against the religion of the heart generally, or more specifically against the especially noxious form it took in the politics of George W. Bush? His concluding two chapters lead one to believe that his inspiration was mainly political. The Republican base hates everything that Enlightened religion has brought to this country and wants to stop it dead in its tracks. It routinely violates the First Amendment. It lets fanatical Christian activists write legislation. It forced politicians to rush to the bedside of Terri Schiavo, whom they saw as the world's "oldest and largest fetus." "All the Evangelicals' resentments under previous presidents, including Republicans like Reagan and the first Bush, were now being addressed," Wills writes.

Wills's book is appearing at precisely the moment of Rove's decline and departure, and it may well be that the next period of American history will witness a more appropriate balance between America's Christian sensibilities. If this is so, Barack Obama may be the person to lead us there, as Wills implies by quoting at length from him. It is certainly where we ought to go, Wills believes. Although the bulk of his book draws contrasts between the religion of the head and the religion of the heart, the book ends with a passionate plea for their reconciliation. "These are not separate churches or separate religions," Wills says of Enlightenment and Evangelical religion. "They do not excommunicate each other. They are simply two tendencies, two temperaments, and an absolute or sterile division between them is stultifying."

Garry Wills is in many ways the ideal man to explain American religion to Americans. He is a Catholic who has a deep understanding of Protestant sensibilities. Now on the left, he began his career on the right. Though he is thoroughly conversant with American history, he is anything but an academic specialist. He sides with the forces of reason, but he appreciates the power of emotion. Most important, he really knows something about religion, both about what it means to be religious as well as about the many forms that religion takes in the world made by human beings. *Head and Heart* is most certainly not a work of apology; Wills is not defending any particular faith, least of all his own. But neither is it an angry polemic denouncing religion with little understanding of why people might choose to put their faith in God. Wills has written a significant book, and it ought to be widely read.

Yet it is also a frustrating book. As is true of nearly all his work, Wills loves to picture himself as the only person who sees the light, who gets it right, when everyone else is enveloped in fog. A typical example of this comes already in his introduction. Conservatives want to believe that America was religious at its Founding so that they can argue that it should be religious now. Liberal secularists, oddly enough, agree with them, because they want to point to how much progress we have made since then. "Both myths are wrong," Wills proclaims. "Both present the exact opposite of what actually occurred." Whenever an author tells me that he is going to explode a myth, I know he is about to say something highly unoriginal.

The oddest aspect of Wills's spirit of iconoclasm is that his book is entirely dependent on the work of other scholars. The history of American religion was told in prodigious detail by Sidney Mead and Sydney Ahlstrom a generation ago. Wills, relying on them for much of his detail, has no correctives to offer to anything they said. In more recent years, a new generation of historians, including Mark Noll, George Marsden, and Nathan Hatch, has offered erudite and fascinating accounts of the evangelical experience. Once again, Wills uses them extensively without challenging their findings. *Head and Heart* is best understood as a well-written re-telling of stories by now widely known, not as a path-breaking re-interpretation of everything we once thought we knew.

There is also his odd technique—it is almost a mental tic—of finding a duality throughout history so as to suggest at the end that the duality ought to be overcome. If the division between Enlightenment religion and evangelical religion is, and ought to be, porous, as Wills claims in his conclusion, then chances are that it has always been firmer in theory than in practice. And so the thesis of Wills's book is constantly in danger of being undermined by the elaboration that the book provides.

Consider a few of the figures and movements that Wills discusses. Some of them belong to neither the Enlightened nor the Evangelical camp—including Tom Paine, who, contrary to Wills, was about as irreligious as a prominent eighteenth-century writer could be. And others belong to both camps: Jonathan Edwards, to cite only the most prominent example, was an avid reader of both John Locke and Isaac Newton, and at the same time a sympathizer with the Great Awakening. And Edwards was by no means singular in this regard. Ralph Waldo Emerson was a man of the head, a momentously formidable intellectual, but he and his fellow Transcendentalists lead more directly to mind cures and hippies than they do to academic departments of theology. The Methodists were evangelical in spirit, but they were led by John Wesley, whom at least one historian—Gertrude Himmelfarb—classifies as an Enlightenment figure; and in any case, American Methodists, evangelical in the nineteenth century, became the very definition of a mainline religion in contemporary times. Fundamentalists were anti-intellectual but given to writing dense, excessively footnoted books. Sacred music—a subject that Wills neglects—can appeal to both our intellect and our feelings. If what we

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really should want is a balance between these poles, well, that is to a considerable extent what we always have had.

Wills's book is subtitled "American Christianities," so, given his topic, it is fair enough that it never discusses Jews, even if modern Judaism offers the very model of an Enlightenment religion. Yet why does he spend so little time on non-Protestant but still Christian faiths? Mormonism, a genuinely American original, makes no appearance in the book. If it did, would it be called a religion of the heart, a religion of the head, or some combination of the two? Mormons have produced one prominent university and a number of distinguished historians, but it hardly seems right, given the hostility to academic freedom characteristic of Brigham Young University, to call Mormonism an Enlightenment faith. But neither is Mormonism primarily a religion of the heart; its followers are not known for speaking in tongues. Theories live or die by their application to hard cases, and by avoiding one of the hardest of them all, Wills evades a great complication and misses a chance to shed light on a genuinely puzzling issue.

It cannot be the case that Wills ignores Mormons because he accepts the notion, put forward by the church's critics, that it is not Christian. I say this because he also manages to downplay his own religion. It is odd that Wills spends so little time on Catholicism, since, unlike Mormonism, both the head and the heart have played a major role in the Catholic church's life in America. On the one hand, it was shaped by great thinkers such as Augustine and Aquinas, its teachings were encoded in rigorously argued documents, and it created great universities, including the one in which I teach. On the other hand, the church was no great friend of the intellect when the mind wandered into those paths called liberalism, modernism, and science. And even if we want to call Catholic anti-intellectualism a matter of the head—"I don't care what kind of an intellectual you are," one can easily imagine Joe McCarthy screaming at one of his anti-intellectual supporters—the church in America was for a long time an immigrant church, and while the more austere arrivals from Germany and Ireland were more attracted to the church's doctrinal side, others, especially those from Italy and Latin America, were more attuned to forms of public devotionalism that speak to the heart. A church that includes both the Thomists associated with the University of Chicago and the televised homilies of Fulton J. Sheen, Bing Crosby, and the Easter Parade would seem a perfect fit for Wills's analysis.

And this, in turn, suggests that what Wills views as an essentially Protestant dualism applies more broadly to every religion. Judaism's intellectuality may be its most prominent feature, but it does have its mystics and obscurantists and fideists and New Agers. And for all I know, individual Mormons may resonate emotionally with the Tabernacle Choir. Religion, as we learned from Weber and Durkheim, appeals to another world while living firmly in this one. Since it is already given to dichotomies—the sacred and the profane, the sinful and the saved, heaven and hell, good versus evil—shouldn't we expect that, by its very dualistic propensities, it will appeal to both reason and revelation? Clearly some religions lean one way and others in a different direction, but they are all wrestling with the same forces.

Moreover, once you start down this path, there is no reason to stop with religion. Anthropologists such as Claude Lévi-Strauss and Mary Douglas remind us that dichotomizing is another term for culture: the raw and the cooked, purity and danger—the list is endless. Perhaps the dualism between the heart and the head is not something that people have learned from religion, but something that religion has learned from people. It is not, after all, as if the conflict between reason and emotion were confined to prayer. Baseball fanatics can be divided into passionate fans and keepers of statistics; psychotherapy relies on powerful memories and on logical deduction; and foreign-policy-making includes both realists and idealists. Some dualities are not useful because they apply to too few things, and some are not useful because they apply to too many.

If Wills's target is really the evangelical revival so prominent in today's Republican Party, his analysis does not add much to what we already know about it. Is Pat Robertson a man of the heart or a man of the head? The only answer one can give is that, like Tom Paine, he is neither—but for the opposite reason. Robertson, so far as I can tell, rarely uses his head; he is the very definition of a right-wing anti-intellectual. But neither does he in any large way use his heart: he is mean-spirited, and he seems to be totally devoid of enthusiasm for anything other than his successful business ventures and self-promoting media appearances. Just because nearly everyone is divided between the head and the heart does not mean that everyone is.

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One of Wills's most interesting points involves abortion, the issue that did so much to fuel America's contemporary culture war. Abortion, he writes, "is not a theological matter at all. There is no theological basis for either defending or condemning abortion. Even the popes have said that it is a matter of natural law, to be decided by natural reason." Wills wants to make the point that once an issue is not theological, it is open to reason, and so abortion should not be the supercharged culture war it has become. But if abortion is not a theological issue, perhaps none of the issues so dear to the Christian right—gay marriage and stem-cell research, let alone the Bush tax cuts and the war in Iraq—are theological issues either. And therefore we are led to the conclusion that there may not be much that is religious about the religious right.

When I see James Dobson on television, the first word that comes into my head is not "otherworldly." Wills, I believe, would agree with this; his focus on Karl Rove, a man he describes as having "no discernible religious beliefs himself," suggests as much. But then why end a book on American religion with a movement that is, in both intent and purpose, essentially political? Wills falls too easily for a political movement's presentation of itself as a religious movement. *Head and Heart* would have been a more effective book if it had ended not with what is happening in Washington, but with what is taking place in the megachurches. Rick Warren, not Karl Rove, should have dominated the final chapters. And the reason for that is simple: American evangelicalism has been flourishing not because of its affinities with the Republican Party, but because, in speaking to the heart more than to the head, it appeals to people searching for personal advice about how to lead their lives.

Garry Wills's call to combine the two sides of American religious experience is a sensible one. "There is no reason why Enlightened religion *has* to become desiccated and cerebral, all light and no heat," he writes. "Nor why the Evangelical *has* to be mindlessly enthusiastic, all heat and no light." This is Wills not at his most iconoclastic, but at his most reasonable. Who could object to the idea that since the head and the heart are both aspects of being human, and since no active human being can function without either, the two ought to find their proper balance? If religion and politics follow the same trends, then the cycles of American political history posited by Arthur Schlesinger Jr. will have their counterparts in American religious experience. We leaned in one direction too much and then compensated too greatly in the other. Eventually we will find our balance.

So let me play here the role that Wills usually assigns to himself and argue against the reasonable position. If we are to have religion, shouldn't we have more religion of the head? I am not impartial here, being a head person myself. But after spending lots of time visiting evangelical colleges and seminaries and attending megachurch services, I come away bemoaning not some right-wing Christian plot to take over the country, but the sheer tackiness of so much of what I experienced. It would be nice, just once, to listen to a sermon delivered by an evangelical preacher that left one with a deeper sense of the world's ironies and complexities. Perhaps those who flock to megachurches would be more uplifted by hearing a Bach chorale than another variant of Christian rock. I certainly would not mind seeing Niebuhr sold in Christian bookstores—or, for that matter, Augustine included in required courses at Catholic universities. My friends among the faithful tell me that revelation is not opposed to reason. When I look back in Western history, I see their point. When I look around me at contemporary religious movements, I do not.

Contemporary religion's lack of intellectual depth may be more dangerous to our country's future than religion's involvement in politics. The contrast between the tragic consequences of America's involvement in Iraq and the generally indifferent views that Americans take toward those consequences strikes me as evidence of how desperately we need a religious sensibility more complex than the one we have. The ability of the Bush administration to redistribute income from the poor to the rich without substantial opposition testifies not only to the weakness of the left, but also to the absence of a deep appreciation of the Jewish prophets and the historical Jesus. Americans did not elect George W. Bush to the presidency twice because they are a devout people. Bush is our president not because Americans are religious, but because they are not religious enough—not, at least, if religion means having a social conscience, being judged, living with wisdom, adhering to the law. Had we more religion—the kind, for example, that motivated the abolitionists and influenced Abraham Lincoln—we would not have been afflicted for so long with the likes of Newt Gingrich and Tom DeLay.

Contemporary religion's lack of intellectual depth is also one of the reasons that contemporary atheism is having such a good ride. The recent sensations by Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, Sam Harris, and Christopher Hitchens are all as predictable and shallow as the religion they spend so much time mocking. Serious atheism of the head should challenge serious religion of the head; but most contemporary atheists prefer to demolish the coarse superstitions all around them, and to call them religion, and to enjoy the applause. And how could it be otherwise? If you do not have serious belief, it is hard to have serious nonbelief. Unlike Diderot and Voltaire, today's polemical skeptics are battening from the absence of hard targets, of philosophically sophisticated targets. It is surely not the business of American religion to supply its critics with their weapons; but it would strengthen both American religion and American atheism if the critics had something at which they could fire.

It is true that evangelicals and mainline Protestants disagree politically, but if serious theological differences between them exist, they are hard to spot. Neither camp has produced a serious work of religious thought in decades. Compared to today's emerging religious figures, Billy Graham—Billy Graham!—seems like a giant. It is not that we lack for Tillichs and Niebuhrs: there are no plurals here, such figures are hard to come by in any age. But we do not even have Billy Sunday! In our anti-philosophical and politicized and wildly psychological culture, in which all anybody seems to be seeking is convenience or affirmation or power, our religious life is in trouble indeed.

Garry Wills entered a Jesuit seminary in the early 1950s, leaving just before graduation. In an earlier period of American history, he might have finished his training and become an important religious thinker. Instead he has pursued his vocation outside the church, and while we may all be better off for that—Wills is a prodigious force in our country's intellectual life—his religion is certainly poorer for his absence. But that's the way it is in modern life: there remain places in American religion for people who use their heads, but all too many people who use their heads do not really mean to fill them. And so we have the religion of the heart run amok. It makes people feel better. It also means that while we may, if we are lucky, have more writers like Garry Wills, we are not likely ever again to have figures like Roger Williams, Jonathan Edwards, or even Anthony Benezet. ◆

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By Wayne Franklin
(Yale University Press, 705 pp., $40)

Like Poe, Stowe, and Longfellow, James Fenimore Cooper—"Fenimore" to his friends—is a giant of world literature with a sharply diminished stature at home. We all think we know what the novels are about: innocent white women (Cooper called them "females") held captive by evil Indians; a heroic white man dressed in deerskin who comes to their rescue, and goes by the name of Hawkeye or Pathfinder or Deerslayer or Natty Bumppo; a vanishing remnant of good Indians with unpronounceable names; a background of war, incessant war, and the little town of Templeton—modeled on Cooperstown, built by Cooper's own father in central New York—perched precariously at the border of nature and civilization. Even people who never read Cooper's novels in their youth are convinced that they have outgrown him. And for every grown-up lucky enough actually to have read *The Last of the Mohicans* or *The Pioneers*, there are a hundred others who have taken on faith Mark Twain's supposedly definitive demolition, "Fenimore Cooper's Literary Offenses," unleashed in 1895.

Twain rightly considered Cooper, who died in 1851 on the day before his sixty-second birthday, an enemy of his own post–Civil War code of realism. Just as Twain, only half in jest, blamed the war on the swashbuckling novels of Walter Scott—"Sir Walter had so large a hand in making Southern character, as it existed before the war, that he is in great measure responsible for the war"—he accused Cooper of contaminating American prose with the same melodramatic absurdities that Scott, Cooper's model in many ways, had unleashed on the South. Cooper, he wrote, "saw nearly all things as through a glass eye, darkly."

Twain's jibes are so delicious that it's hard to take Cooper seriously after reading of his supposed offenses. "For instance," wrote Twain in one of his memorable sallies: "one of his acute Indian experts, Chingachgook (pronounced Chicago, I think), has lost the trail of a person he is tracking through the forest."

> Apparently that trail is hopelessly lost. Neither you nor I could ever have guessed out the way to find it. It was very different with Chicago. Chicago was not stumped for long. He turned a running stream out of its course, and there, in the slush in its old bed, were that person's moccasin tracks. The current did not wash them away, as it would have done in all other like cases—no, even the eternal laws of Nature have to vacate when Cooper wants to put up a delicate job of woodcraft on the reader.

It's true that if we look for late nineteenth-century realism in Cooper—the accurate representation of ordinary people in plausible circumstances that we find in Howells or Wharton—we are bound for disappointment.

Too embarrassed to risk our own assessment of Cooper, we are forced to accept his greatness secondhand: from Goethe, who admired Cooper's "rich material and its subtle presentation"; from Balzac, who drew his idea of the linked *Comédie Humaine* from Cooper's Leather-Stocking novels; from Conrad, who admired Cooper's sea tales and passionately defended him against Mark Twain ("whose dismal jargon … smirches whatever he touches"). Isaiah Berlin was surprised to find that the Russian critic Belinsky considered Cooper the equal of Shakespeare. These writers wrote so extravagantly about Cooper that one sometimes feels they drew the breath of life from him. "I am very ill," Franz Schubert, on his deathbed, wrote to a friend in 1828. "Be so kind as to help me in this desperate situation with some books. By Cooper I have read: 'The Last of the Mohicans,' 'The Spy,' 'The Pilot,' and 'The Pioneers.' In case you have anything more of him, I implore you … to send it to me."

For modern readers, it was D. H. Lawrence, in his *Studies in Classic American Literature* in 1923, who revealed the visionary power of Cooper's novels. Lawrence conceded the absence of the "cruel iron of reality" in Cooper's narratives, but unlike Twain, he did not stop there. "Now let me put aside my impatience at the unreality of this vision, and accept it as a wish-fulfillment vision, a kind of yearning myth," Lawrence wrote. "Because it seems to me that the things in Cooper that make one so savage, when one compares them with actuality, are perhaps, when one considers them as presentations of a deep subjective desire, real in their way, and almost prophetic." The visionary author of *The Rainbow* found in *The Pioneers*, Cooper's fictionalized account of the founding of the town of Cooperstown, "some of the loveliest, most glamorous pictures in all literature," specifying such indelible scenes as the turkey shoot in the snow, the clouds of passenger pigeons obscuring the sky as they fly in from the south to meet the waiting rifles of the settlers, and night fishing on the Glimmerglass lake. "Perhaps my taste is childish," Lawrence wrote, "but these scenes in *Pioneers* seem to me marvelously beautiful."

But writers from abroad are not the only ones who have felt the power of Cooper's novels. If we read our American classics more carefully, we might, as Wayne Franklin argues in his leisurely and deeply researched canvassing of the first half of Cooper's life, find Cooper's imprint in such landmark books as *Walden*, *Moby-Dick*, and even *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Thoreau's debt to Cooper is obvious enough: "in going to *his* pond in *his* cabin," Franklin remarks, "Thoreau was reenacting in ritual form the solitary life Cooper had imagined for his forest hero in the Leather-Stocking saga." Melville acknowledged the "vivid and awakening power" of Cooper's sea tales, and it is easy to see why. *The Pilot* (1824), undertaken as an "unpremeditated decision, purely an impulse," according to Cooper, remains an exhilarating read. A fictionalized account of John Paul Jones's Revolutionary War exploits along the British coast, it was written as something of a corrective to Walter Scott's nautical romance *The Pirate* (1821), and meant to show off Cooper's superior knowledge of seamanship.

As for *Huckleberry Finn*, Franklin discerns an oedipal conflict between Cooper and his critic Mark Twain:

> Anyone who reads the Leather-Stocking Tales and the Mississippi River books of Mark Twain, especially *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, sees at once that in terms of setting, theme, and indeed

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characterization, the latter book owed much to Cooper's series.... The spiritual father of Huck Finn was none other than Natty Bumppo—a demotic Euro-American hero who resists the confines of "sivilization" and, with a member of another race as his companion, finds his freedom in nature. No wonder that Mark Twain felt a need to hunt down and kill Natty's own progenitor.

For Franklin, Cooper wasn't just a major American writer; he was one of the supreme inventors of the American imagination. "Almost single-handedly in the 1820s," Franklin writes, "Cooper invented the key forms of American fiction—the Western, the sea tale, the Revolutionary romance—forms that set a suggestive agenda for subsequent writers, even for Hollywood and television." He might have added the international spy novel to this list; Cooper's second novel, *The Spy*, of 1821 anticipates Ambler and Le Carré in its evocation of ambiguous attachments in love and war. Even the detective novel, often attributed to Poe, may owe as much to Cooper's bent twigs and footprints in the forest. An exhilarating run of pages in Walter Benjamin's *Arcades Project* traces the origins of the genre to Cooper's narratives of pursuit, with examples in French literature such as Dumas-*fils*'s *Les Mohicans de Paris*.

Cooper's business sense, his improvisatory response to a changing and burgeoning literary marketplace, made him also an inventor of another kind. A major aim of Franklin's volume is to demonstrate how "Cooper can be said to have invented not just an assortment of literary types but the very career of the American writer." The evidence for this claim, a dogged accumulation of financial and contractual detail, is tedious at times, and I wish that in other ways Franklin were not quite so attentive to the professorial pressures of the moment, specifically with respect to Cooper's alleged "treatment" of race, class, and gender. Still, the book is clearly and sometimes vigorously written, and scrupulous about what is firmly known and what remains conjectured. Much of the research into lesser-known portions of Cooper's career is sensible and fresh.

Cooper's early life has the fascination of one of his own novels. In his appetite for varied and often dangerous experience, he sometimes seems deliberately to have lived his life according to novelistic plots. Like a picaresque hero, his origins were inconspicuous. He was born plain James Cooper—he added the vivid "Fenimore," his mother's maiden name, much later—in New Jersey in 1789, to a family of Quaker origins and modest means. The following year, his father moved the family to the banks of Lake Otsego in central New York, and founded the town of Cooperstown. Educated by local tutors and given the free run of the woods, Cooper developed an early taste for popular novels by Scott and others as well as for Shakespeare, declaimed in childhood performances for the simple folk of Cooperstown.

There is comedy in Cooper's brief career at Yale, which he entered at thirteen. The undergraduates had just undergone a rousing revival under Ezra Stiles, president of the school, but there was nothing saintly about their behavior. Cooper in particular "earned himself a reputation as a hellion while at Yale," according to Franklin. He was taken under the protection of the young instructor Benjamin Silliman, who distinguished himself as a chemist during the early decades of the discipline. Silliman described Cooper as "a fine sparkling beautiful boy of alluring person & interesting manners." Selected to serve as Silliman's lab assistant, Cooper repaid his mentor by using his newfound expertise to blow up the door of a classmate he had quarreled with.

Expelled from Yale, he sought a career in the navy, going to sea first on a merchant vessel, in 1806, and then serving on various naval ships, on Lake Ontario and in the Atlantic, at a time when the American Navy barely existed. In 1810, he met Susan De Lancey, a young woman of French background whose family had fought on the British side in the Revolutionary War (in *The Spy*, the Revolution is portrayed as primarily a civil war). "I loved her like a man," Cooper famously and ambiguously reported to one of his brothers, "and told her of it like a sailor." They were married on New Year's Day the following year and had their first child, punctually, in September.

Seeking a more settled life for his aristocratic wife and his growing family, and finding his in-laws a more reliable source of stability than the messy finances and garbled inheritance that followed his father's death, Cooper settled in Westchester County, eventually building a house in Scarsdale, and took up farming. His first signed article concerned animal husbandry. Balked in his repeated attempts to restore his family fortunes, he invested in a whaling ship in 1819. When this quixotic enterprise also failed to provide the reliable source of income he sought, he took up—like that other failed whaler, Melville, twenty years later—the even less certain craft of novel-writing.

ANTHONY RUSSO

What is there to say about Cooper's novels, especially those early successes—*The Spy* (1821), *The Pioneers* (1823), *The Pilot* (1824), and *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826)—that were written during the "early years" of Franklin's biography, before his departure with his family for an extended sojourn of seven years abroad? The first thing to say is that the books are more varied, more interesting, and better written than we have generally been allowed or encouraged to believe. In an otherwise positive assessment of Cooper's work, Poe observed in passing that "the mere English of our author was never, at any period, remarkable for precision." Mark Twain went far beyond Poe in claiming that Cooper "wrote about the poorest English that exists in our language." But when he combed the books for schoolmarmish examples, he came up with such supposedly egregious offenses as the confusion of "meretricious" for "factitious," "treacherous" for "hostile," and "rejoined" for "remarked"—the sort of slips, if indeed they are slips, that any writer might be guilty of.

It is true that Cooper's novels—he eventually wrote thirty-two, in addition to travel books, a history of the United States Navy, and essays in social criticism—seem written on the run, with their impulsive openings, their zigzag plots, their leisurely sags when the author addresses the reader. Franklin blames what he calls "the venturesome quality" of Cooper's first novels on his "deepening indebtedness" during the early 1820s. Franklin notes that the first volume of *The Spy* "not only was set in type but also was proofed, and a thousand copies of it printed, before Cooper even sat down to *begin* the second one." A rigid page limit on the second volume resulted in what Cooper himself conceded was a "crowded and hurried" dénouement. The pressures of the marketplace, in Franklin's view, determined the shape and nature of such novels. "If there is a single motivating factor driving my narrative," he writes, "it is economics." Of course, there is some truth to this

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wolf-at-the-door scenario, but I suspect that a more careful Cooper would have been a less interesting writer.

Early and late, Cooper was an improvisatory writer. He took up writing on a whim, when his wife challenged him to write a better novel than the pulp they were reading. Always drawn to risks of all kinds, competitive and contentious, he relished ambitious undertakings and impossible deadlines. Nothing is better in his novels than their superb openings, the first casting out of the sweeping narrative net. The magisterial first sentences of *The Last of the Mohicans* recall Gibbon's elegiac rhythms and balanced oppositions:

> It was a feature peculiar to the colonial wars of North America, that the toils and dangers of the wilderness were to be encountered before the adverse hosts could meet. A wide and apparently an impervious boundary of forests severed the possessions of the hostile provinces of France and England. The hardy colonist, and the trained European who fought at his side, frequently expended months in struggling against the rapids of the streams, or in effecting the rugged passes of the mountains, in quest of an opportunity to exhibit their courage in a more martial conflict. But, emulating the patience and self-denial of the practiced native warriors, they learned to overcome every difficulty; and it would seem that, in time, there was no recess of the woods so dark, nor any secret place so lovely, that it might claim exemption from the inroads of those who had pledged their blood to satiate their vengeance, or to uphold the cold and selfish policy of the distant monarchs of Europe.

The maze-like sentences seem themselves a forest in which the combatants are momentarily lost.

It is no surprise that Cooper's prose is derived from eighteenth-century models and modes. The "glamorous pictures" that D. H. Lawrence admired owe much to the American landscape painters of the Hudson River School, whom Cooper knew in New York. His scenes, like theirs, are constructed around the eighteenth-century conventions of the beautiful and the sublime. Nature has two faces: a welcoming world of grassy valleys and settled prospects, and a fearsome world of looming mountains and cataracts and thunderstorms. The future site of Templeton—as described by Judge Temple himself, who has climbed a tree for a better view—mingles both aspects:

> Not an opening was to be seen in the boundless forest, except where the lake lay, like a mirror of glass. The water was covered by myriads of the wild-fowl that migrate with the changes in the season; and while in my situation on the branch of the beech, I saw a bear, with her cubs, descend to the shore to drink. I had met many deer, gliding through the woods, in my journey; but not the vestige of a man could I trace during my progress, nor from my elevated observatory. No clearing, no hut, none of the winding roads that are now to be seen, were there; nothing but mountains rising behind mountains; and the valley, with its surface of branches enlivened here and there with the faded foliage of some tree.

Some of the stranger features of Cooper's novels draw on more distant and exotic sources. Rereading *The Last of the Mohicans*, I was struck by how many of the epigraphs to chapters are drawn from Shakespeare's comedies. In an earlier monograph, *The New World of James Fenimore Cooper*, Franklin suggested that these allusions provide comic relief from the grim violence that pervades the novel. But Cooper insists on a deeper connection between his own fictions and Shakespeare's world of mismatched couples, humiliated killjoys, magic forests, and masquerade. The plot of *The Last of the Mohicans* has all these, and the mood of the novel is often closer to *The Magic Flute* than to Cormac McCarthy. A bear lumbers into the cave where the younger sister, Alice, is held captive; but have no fear, it turns out that the bear is really Natty Bumppo in disguise. The epigraph to the chapter is Snug's question from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, "Have you the lion's part written? Pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study." Other episodes, such as the unhinged Calvinist singing-master trying to teach beavers to sing, seem to come from the enchanted Forest of Arden rather than the Adirondacks of the French and Indian War.

Franklin suggests another source for these scenes of animal-human transaction. He has gone deeply into Cooper's familiarity with American Indian traditions and rituals. Cooper learned what he could about Indian languages, and shared the nineteenth-century assumption (given its fullest expression in Longfellow's *Song of Hiawatha*) that Indians, in their intimacy with nature, spoke in more concrete and poetic turns of phrase than educated Europeans. But he also knew something of the meaning of totems among the Indians, and in *The Last of the Mohicans* he was the first to use the Ojibway-derived word in a literary work. "The facility with which Cooper's human characters merge with natural creatures," writes Franklin, "suggests that he was self-consciously seeking to model this first of his 'Indian' tales on the mental habits of the Native Americans, not just on the outward plot of their history."

The wrenching love story between one of those Native Americans, Uncas, the "last of the Mohicans," and Cora Munro has lost none of its power. "For the first time we get actual women," Lawrence writes, "the dark, handsome Cora and her frail sister, the White Lily. The good old division, the dark sensual woman and the clinging, submissive little blonde, who is so 'pure.'" It is a surprise to learn, well into the novel, that they are actually half-sisters, and that Cora's West Indian mother was "from that unfortunate class, who are so basely enslaved to administer to the wants of a luxurious people." As so often in his novels, Cooper surprises us with his sophistication, and prefigures the tragic women of mixed race who will people the novels of Stowe and Cable and Faulkner.

Franklin's first volume leaves Cooper flush with the success of *The Last of the Mohicans*, on the eve of his departure for France. Already a world-renowned writer, he crossed the Atlantic to meet his admirers face to face, not through a glass eye darkly. In Paris he wrote such books as *Notions of the Americans* (1828), his defense of the United States against negative attacks from European travelers, and *The Prairie* (1827), his strange and moving fantasy (he had never seen the Western plains) of the last days of Natty and Chingachgook. On his return to his native country, he incurred the wrath of his neighbors when he asserted his family's possession of a piece of land on Otsego Lake, and the wrath of nativist critics for the popularity of his novels abroad. A sturdy democrat to the end—in 1838 he wrote a book called *The American Democrat*—Cooper wasted a lot of time defending himself against charges that he was an elitist and would-be aristocrat. On the occasion of Cooper's death in 1851, Emerson wrote of "an old debt to him of happy days." It is a debt that American critics and readers, in their still-grudging admiration and still-automatic disdain, have yet to repay. ◆

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New York Diarist

Pet Fancy

It can't be easy to be a model at Pet Fashion Week, whether you strut the runway on two legs or on four. The highlight of the two-year-old festival of canine couture, held in August in Manhattan, provides a surreal blend of *Zoolander* and Westminster. Amazonian models sport their fiercest fashionista stares—but alongside them, tugging at jeweled leashes, are befuddled pups in tartan skirts and crushed-velvet trains. Unlike their human counterparts, these doggie supermodels don't feel much compulsion to vamp, preen, or even, in one case, return to the dressing room upon reaching the end of the catwalk. It could be worse. Petware designers tell stories of, um, *accidents* brought on by the pulsing music and popping flashbulbs.

Still, if the pet fashion industry hasn't quite reached the Donatella Versace level, it's getting close. The scene has its own stars, like designer Björn Gärdsby, who jokes that his Manfred of Sweden line of Sergeant Pepper–influenced dog jackets features leather so soft that it feels "like butter, or a woman, whatever your preference is." With his shaggy hair and his horn-rimmed glasses, Gärdsby could easily pass for Austin Powers—that is, if the international man of mystery traveled with a well-appointed Yorkshire Terrier. Dog stylist Sathit Suratphiphit represents another level of canine aristocracy ("Five Thailand Champions with HRH Princess Bajrakitiyabha's Trophies," his card reads). Suratphiphit's Bangkok-based team elaborately coiffed a series of small white dogs, combing their fur into bows and feathers and dyeing it orange, green, and purple before sending them down the runway with human models done up like Buddhist temple statues.

The number of customers who would dye Fido is probably even smaller than the number who would commission him a bespoke jacket—in other words, statistically insignificant. But that's not the point. The whole spectacle, duly reported in the press during the slow-news month of August, drills home the message that a dog's bathing and grooming is a professional's job—not something that a responsible owner ought to do in the backyard with a hose and maybe some Johnson & Johnson. Once you've sold that idea, how hard can it be to move a product like the 250-milliliter, $22 bottle of Isle of Dogs Evening Primrose Oil Shampoo? In the trend described in Michael J. Silverstein and Neil Fiske's 2003 business best-seller *Trading Up: The New American Luxury*, every last consumer category seems to have added some superluxe product line in the hopes of attracting discerning spenders. It was only a matter of time before Sub-Zero fridges, L'Occitane en Provence body lotions, and Belvedere vodka were joined by objects of desire aimed at consumers wealthy and puppy-crazed enough to buy in.

The way we treat pets has always offered a mirror to society. Modern pet-keeping was a product of the Victorian era, whose creepy racial science lives on in our lingering fascination with breed and purity. Today, the excesses and stratifications of contemporary consumerism are on display, as was made clear a few days after Pet Fashion Week when hotelier Leona Helmsley died, bequeathing $12 million to her beloved Maltese, Trouble. Nor is Trouble the only consumer keeping the pet industry afloat: Sales have made a gravity-defying leap to $41 billion this year, up from $17 billion in 1994, according to the American Pet Products Manufacturers' Association. Now that big-box pet-supply stores have become household names—the San Diego Padres, for instance, play their home games at PETCO Park—higher-rent purveyors inevitably look to distinguish themselves from the masses.

You don't have to walk far from the runways of Pet Fashion Week to find examples of this boom in high-end petcare. A Chelsea facility called the Dog Run includes a swimming pool and offers half-hour swim sessions for $45, $55 with massage. The service side of the pet industry is sufficiently well-developed that owners need not even schlep their animals down to the pool—several competing pet car services will gladly do it for them. Pet Chauffeur, one of the best-known, charges $30 for a ride of less than 40 blocks; for another $36 an hour, they'll wait around to take the pup home after his swim.

One piece of fashion that would surely never be on display at Pet Fashion Week, whose organizers fund canine charities and include shelter dogs in their runway show, is an Atlanta Falcons jersey. The runway show took place just as the team's quarterback, Michael Vick, was preparing to plead guilty on dogfighting charges. The plea means there won't be exhaustive new public testimony about the dogfighting underworld his case briefly brought to light. This is a pity, as the testimony would likely have underlined the odd juxtaposition between growing numbers of Americans who think nothing of dropping $55 on a Shih Tzu Shiatsu session and an apparently sizeable number of others who gather to watch the animals fight to the death.

After his indictment, Vick's small crew of defenders grasped for a cultural justification—dogfighting, it was said, was more common, and less disdained, among poor, Southern, African Americans. But that argument loses power when you consider that Vick was a multimillionaire NFL star. Similarly, the notion that modern petmania is restricted to New York's elites was undercut by the fact that the folks I met queuing up to chat with Gärdsby included buyers from a pet boutique in Alabama, far from the latte belt. Even the Isle of Dogs team, pushing a pet shampoo more expensive than any human shampoo I've ever used, comes from Milwaukee.

Still, these stories reflect some of society's thornier divisions, with a stratospheric rich enjoying ever-greater splendors, an underclass that stays out of view until some scandal breaks, and a vast big-box-shopping middle. Luckily for those of us who deplore Vick's favored form of entertainment, there's little likelihood that the class war between four-legged haves and have-nots will ever become an actual dogfight. But, if it does, we'll at least be able to tell the upper-crust dogs by their uniforms and Evening Primrose–scented fur.

Michael Currie Schaffer

Michael Currie Schaffer is working on a book about pet culture and the pet industry.

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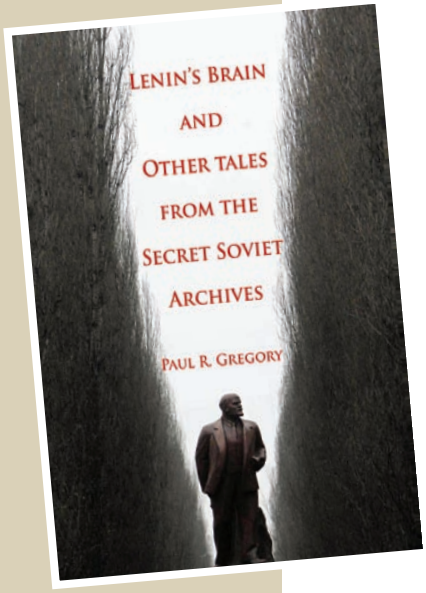

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PAUL R. GREGORY

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Paul R. Gregory, a Hoover Institution research fellow, holds an endowed professorship in the Department of Economics at the University of Houston, Texas, and is a research professor at the German Institute for Economic Research in Berlin.

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